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AUGUST 1956

COMMENTARY

Civil Rights in 1956 — CHARLES ABRAMS
The Oren Case — WALTER Z. LAQUEUR
Judaism and the Hellenistic Experience — MOSES HADAS
Two Poems — CHARLES GAINES
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How I Chose to Come Here — ABRAHAM CAHAN
On the Horizon
The Litvinov "Diaries" — BERTRAM D. WOLFE
The Study of Man
On the Economics of F.D.R. — J. K. GALBRAITH

BOOKS IN REVIEW

Irving Kristol — Robert Gorham Davis — John Hollander
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PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

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AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

IRVING M. ENGEL, *President*

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This *I Believe*

by Harry and Bonaro Overstreet*

"THE very temptation we face, in a time of fear and anger, to 'huddle' with our mental, emotional, and professional kind can lead us into a far from healthy state. It involves the risk that, exercising freedom of speech and assembly, we will talk ourselves into adding phantom threats to real ones—hitting out as furiously, or as nervously, at the one as at the other.

"Further than this, the temptation to 'huddle' with our kind involves the risk that we will, as a 'fear-sharing' group, talk ourselves into a strange 'apartness' from our society—an 'apartness' that can all too easily turn into a sense of being *excluded, discriminated against,* and *undervalued.*

"As a matter of fact, working as we ourselves do and have done over the years, with many different types of groups—racial, economic, religious, professional, political—we have been struck by the number and variety of groups that seem increasingly to feel themselves excluded, discriminated against, and undervalued. More than once we have found that when two groups—liberal and reactionary, or labor and management—are opposing each other over some issue *each sees itself as a beleaguered minority.*

"When a *sense of minority status* is thus simultaneously experienced by both parties to conflict it means, we believe, that each party has been talking too exclusively and too anxiously to itself. The members of each side have been *monologuing in unison*—and have monologued themselves into a state where they feel that their one consuming task is that of self-defense. Or to put the matter another way, they have exercised their Constitutional freedom of speech and assembly to trap themselves: to induce in themselves the distribution of energy that goes with fear and anger rather than with constructiveness and clarity of thought. Above we ventured the term 'voluntary catatonia' to describe the immobility of a mind that has been given room to move. Here—even though we recognize that the term is an exaggeration—we are tempted to speak of 'voluntary paranoia' to describe this use of freedom to talk ourselves and assemble ourselves into a conviction of being persecuted."

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J. M. Kaplan, President

**WANTED: MORE SPACE FOR MORE MINDS*
By Harry and Bonaro Overstreet
The Saturday Review—June 30, 1956

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IN FORTHCOMING ISSUES OF

COMMENTARY

Politics and Democracy in the 30's *Oscar Handlin*

The paradoxes of the current election campaign, rhetorical and substantial, are pointed out by an eminent historian in the course of a discussion of three recent, and seminal, books on American politics.

Spain, Maimonides, and the Jews *Jocelyn Davey*

A British novelist describes his participation in the celebration sponsored by the Spanish government in 1935 to commemorate the 800th anniversary of the birth in Cordova of the "great Spanish philosopher" Maimonides.

Notes on Gentile Philo-Semitism *Edmund Wilson*

An account by one of America's foremost literary critics of curious attitudes toward Jews and Judaism displayed in the New England of an earlier day.

My Friend Paul *Theodore Frankel*

How a young refugee who has never been able to forget his years in Buchenwald, and the excitement of the immediate postwar period in Munich, manages a shapeless life in America.

A Jewish Identity *Stanley Edgar Hyman*

In an extended review of David Daiches's autobiographical *Two Worlds,* Mr. Hyman raises once again the question of how to define Jewish identity.

The Christian Minorities in Israel *Shaul P. Colby*

An official in the department of the Israeli government dealing with the problems of the religious minorities reviews the position of the Christian churches and sects in Israel.

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COMMENTARY

CIVIL RIGHTS IN 1956

Politics Replaces the Economic Motive

CHARLES ABRAMS

ONE is not surprised to find that most Democrats and Republicans would prefer to see the civil rights issue buried rather than exposed during the coming election campaign. So thorny a problem cannot be discussed in pretty political rhetoric. Thus it is proposed that the question of civil rights be excluded from campaign discussion, and the whole matter be left to the Supreme Court. At the same time, a course of "moderation" is advocated: i.e., a mild civil rights program that would appease some Negro voters without alienating either the rabid segregationists or the less unreasonable elements in the South.

In the past, civil rights measures used to arouse heated debate, but whether minorities fared well or badly depended less upon the specific written protections they won than upon the social and economic patterns within which they lived and worked. While strong economic forces still operate in favor of minorities as they did at various times in the past, powerful counter-forces have appeared at the social and political levels to threaten the progress of America's "second-class citizens." The economic motive alone, without other safeguards or pressures to accord hitherto disfavored groups their due rights as Americans, may not prevail against these forces. Now more than ever, the fate of minorities, in the North as well as in the South, depends on the explicit protection of their civil rights by juridical and political means.

I

THE motives prompting measures to safeguard civil rights have changed with the times. In 1789, when the Constitution was drawn up, the demand for a Bill of Rights arose out of the fear that the central government, if not properly restrained, might turn tyrannical. But even if the Bill of

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THE plight of our new immigrants and migrants—Negro, Puerto Rican, Mexican—offers a serious challenge to our American way. Since their assimilation to the status of free and equal citizens cannot be left simply to the ordinary social and economic processes, politics has once again to take the lead. This is the point made here by CHARLES ABRAMS, an old contributor, who is now chairman of the New York State Commission Against Discrimination after having been New York State Rent Administrator. Mr. Abrams has also headed a number of United Nations missions on housing. Having practiced law in the past, he now teaches at the University of Pennsylvania and at the New School for Social Research in New York. He has written for numerous periodicals and is the author of three books: *The Future of Housing*, *Revolution in Land*, and *Forbidden Neighbors* (published in January 1955). His article "How to Remedy 'Our Puerto Rican Problem'" appeared in our issue of February 1955.

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Rights had not been appended to the Constitution, it is probable that in the United States of that day the social and economic pattern would of itself have acted to limit the central government's power for many years to come.

Nor was this pattern seriously challenged by immigration from Europe after 1830. There were eruptions of prejudice, but on the whole the European immigrant, if not the African, assimilated easily. The frontier was still open, and one-man, small-scale, localized enterprise continued to predominate both in agriculture and trade. In 1861 Lincoln could still describe our system as one in which the "prudent penniless beginner in the world labors for wages a while, saves a surplus with which to buy tools or land for himself, then labors on his own account another while, and at length hires another new beginner to help him." The society of which the European immigrant became a part was in those days hardly conducive to lasting oppression.

The Founding Fathers had left the treatment of the Negro to the states; hence the civil rights amendments and statutes enacted after the Civil War were quite properly aimed at them rather than at the central government. But it was not legislation that ultimately enlarged the Negro's rights and opportunities: he had to wait still another fifty years, and for the general economic expansion attendant upon two world wars, really to improve his status.

As industrialization proceeded, as cities bulged with European immigrants to whom the frontier was no longer open, and as a new crop of entrepreneurs moved into business and finance, the collapse of democratic safeguards seemed threatened again, this time by xenophobia, anti-Catholicism, and class conflict. But it turned out that safety valves were hidden in the economic process itself. The new entrepreneurs were no paragons of virtue and cared little about personal rights or the equality of all men. Quite the contrary: they imported cheap contract labor and fiercely resisted the efforts of native-born workers to get better wages. Yet their very ruthlessness acted to create a *free* labor market and keep it competitive, with skill rather than national origin, and capacity for work rather than breed or creed, determining who was hired and who wasn't. The bias against new immigrants, though bursting into expression from time to time, could not prevail against the sheer need for working hands. Hence it was economic opportunity and economic expansion, not Constitutional protection, that promised equality—social as well as political—to the post-Civil War immigrant.

EUROPEAN immigration all but ceased after the First World War, but the demand for labor continued. It was then that the Negro made his first real move toward the cities, especially those of the North. By 1940, almost two and a half million Negroes were living in the northern part of the country east of the Mississippi, and in the next ten years the non-white population more than doubled in thirty standard metropolitan areas of the Northwestern, North Central, and Western states. The Negro, finding himself in a strange environment in the Northern cities, had to make a rapid change-over from handicraft to industry and from a rural to an urban way of life. To these difficulties was added his "higher visibility," which slowed his upward movement on the economic ladder and put him at a disadvantage as against the white immigrant. But even if urban life did emphasize his lowly economic and social status, the Negro had at last broken away from sharecropping. There was to be no turning back.

Today there are over a half million Puerto Ricans in this country, and two and a half million persons of Mexican descent, and they face difficulties much like those of the Negro. Impermanence of location and lack of facility in the English language are additional handicaps in their case. Working in gangs has insulated many Mexicans from contact with non-Mexicans, while casual employment has kept them rootless and proved a factor in their segregation. The Puerto Ricans, though they have the benefit

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of American citizenship if not of the English language, and though their in-migration continues at the net rate of about 45,000 a year, have found it difficult to establish roots in other areas than New York City; all too often they return to the Island before the assimilative processes can begin to touch them.

If these new migrants could benefit by the same economic and social processes that operated for the European immigrant in the past, the need for specific political protection of their rights might have become no more important than it was in the case of the Europeans. But the newcomers of our day are, for one thing, more easily identifiable by their color, which cannot be disguised merely by exchanging dungarees for gray flannels. For another, the only frontier left open to them is an urban one. Like all other migrants, their prospects in this country depend mainly on their ability to find *homes* and *jobs*, and here too they suffer disadvantages not known to their predecessors. To accommodate the previous waves of immigration, houses were built either by the immigrants themselves, by the companies which employed them, or else by speculative builders. Such speculative housing did not meet the best standards, but it was at least new, built in quantity, and rented at costs the immigrant could afford. By the time the Negroes and Puerto Ricans began pouring into our cities, only the left-overs of these sub-standard dwellings remained available to them. For these and whatever other hovels they could find, they had to pay ever increasing rents. One of the consequences has been such overcrowding as to make it impossible for the new migrants to raise their families decently.

MEANWHILE, moreover, a social revolution has taken place in American residential neighborhoods whose effect has been to put a new and extraordinary emphasis on social status. Ever since immigration to America began, Negroes and whites, foreigners and natives have been found living in the same general areas; one could see on a single city block the Jewish storekeeper, the Italian barber, the Chinese laundryman, the German restaurateur, and the Negro superintendent. Besides, members of minority groups often had to live quite close to their more affluent customers in order to do the work of laundering their collars, baking their bread, and trimming their hair. Those minority members, on the other hand, who chose to live among their own kind could, as their condition improved, move elsewhere with relative freedom.

In recent times, however, heterogeneity has turned into a liability. The neighborhood where one lives has become an index of status, and a neighbor of the wrong complexion a token of one's own social decline. A man's status used to be judged by such things as the kind of crystal in his chandeliers; today the race or religion of his neighbors is considered a more pertinent criterion. The new exclusive suburb, with its basis in the quest for status, is now shaping the American personality as effectively as the quite different conditions of the frontier did a century ago. Builders capitalize on the new "value" of exclusiveness and sell it as they sell tiled bathrooms, while municipal and other local officials, in response to the demands of their constituents, employ all the direct and devious devices of office to keep out unwanted intruders.

In 1934, while this social revolution was taking shape, a concurrent political revolution that expanded the powers of government had the effect of ratifying and intensifying the emerging patterns of exclusiveness. Hitherto most decisions in American economic life had been made by businessmen, and the improved position of minorities was a by-product of business activity and of the pursuit by employers of their own interests in the matter of cheap labor. Government, no longer the land-giver, had gradually become a kind of umpire, an impartial overseer, interfering with private operations only when the public conscience was shocked by a violation of the rules. Business feared and opposed expansion of the Federal powers, while government in

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its turn stood aloof from business. The mercantilistic idea that what was good for the government was good for business had faded with the rise of laissez-faire in the 18th century—while the current notion that what is good for business is good for the government had not yet been born.

The private entrepreneur operated under the ethic of *caveat emptor*, "I am not my brother's keeper," and "Let the devil take the hindmost." The Constitutional or public ethic, on the other hand, was that of the arbiter, the guardian of the weak against the strong, the counterpoise between diverse interests. This public ethic, carrying the implication that entrepreneurs have duties and responsibilities as well as rights, stood over the lower private ethic and served as a continual challenge to it.

This challenge was met by the emergence of a new social consciousness on the part of business and government at the beginning of this century. The regulatory powers of both the state and Federal governments grew, philanthropy spread, and the rights of the consumer were acknowledged and increasingly acted upon. At the state level—at least in the North—there were such improvements as dwelling laws, health laws, laws for the protection of factory workers, and zoning and civil rights legislation. At the Federal level there came a growing effort to check monopoly and unfair trade practices, and generally to prevent giant business from swallowing up the human beings at the base of the economic pyramid. Though far from being animated by motives of universal benevolence, private enterprise, when restrained by government from its own excesses, appeared for a time to promise as good a pattern of fair play as could then be conceived.

WHATEVER promise it may have held, however, the old system had shown little capacity to cope with mass unemployment or effectively to correct the more flagrant excesses of entrepreneurs. In its effort during the Great Depression to prime economic recovery, the Federal government expanded not only its regulatory power in order to check some of these excesses, but also its welfare and spending powers in order to relieve unemployment, improve housing conditions, revive lending and investment, and stabilize the farm economy. It was not long before the Federal government's "general welfare power" became virtually unlimited—became, in fact, the primary force in the economy. Later the requirements of war and defense further widened the government's involvement in the economic process and extended its financial interest into almost every major aspect of the private economy.

The growth of Federal powers and of Federal expenditure brought great benefits but also some unforeseen liabilities. One was the rise of a new entrepreneurial class that no longer opposed government expansion but, on the contrary, pressed for it to a greater extent than any starry-eyed reformer ever did. Socialization of losses and socialization of risk, far from being feared, were welcomed under the label of "aid to private enterprise." Mortgages by the billions were lifted out of the portfolios of lending institutions. An FHA system designed to stimulate home-buying insured the risks of lenders and eliminated the essential investment of builders. A Home Loan Bank System enabled savings and loan institutions to borrow Federal money, sell shares to the government, and swell their resources through government guarantee of their deposits.

Whatever the tonic effect of these measures on the white majority, they militated against the interests of the non-white minorities. When, for example, Congress adopted a small slum-clearance and private housing program, it was soon curtailed on the ground that it was in competition with private enterprise. A new program was instituted under which the government subsidized private slum clearance, and the result was in most cases to displace minorities from the footholds they had secured in the cities and to make it harder than ever for them to secure adequate housing.

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No sooner was the shift made from general to "business welfare" in housing and lending than the conflict between public and private ethics reappeared. The racial restrictions prevalent in private building operations became the rule in Federally aided ones, and for more than ten years FHA's official publications advocated "racial homogeneity" and racial covenants in residential neighborhoods, at the same time advising the barring of minority groups from FHA-aided projects. Officials of the Home Loan Bank System, writing in the trade publications, urged similar practices. Thus, even under the liberal New Deal, the higher public ethic gave way to the lower private one in housing, and the new public benefits were dispensed unconditionally in a market place.

The entrepreneur who felt that he had a perfect right to act on his biases, and comply with those of his customers in his own private operations, could not understand why he had to change his business ethics and practices just because the government was underwriting his risks. The FHA official could not see why the ethic he lived by in his Washington suburb had to be changed when he sat behind a government desk. His job was to sell a government insurance and lending scheme; bias was part of the market mechanism, and it seemed perfectly logical for him not only to tolerate but encourage private discriminatory practices as long as this helped make his program successful.

The practice of exclusion that had been inaugurated by the private builders consequently became incorporated in public specifications, and stayed there. Though now erased from the official manuals, racial exclusiveness and homogeneity in residential neighborhoods remain unwritten policy to this day.

THE ethical conflicts in the new housing economy could at least be stated, if not resolved; those provoked by the employment of minorities under the new political order were more mixed and complex. Here the ethical responsibility of three groups was concerned: purely private industry, private industry that dealt with government or benefited from its aid or power, and public organizations receiving public aid or exercising public power.

In the past the private employer, like the private builder, enjoyed an absolute right to discriminate: he could hire, or refuse to hire, anyone he pleased. This is still the rule in most of the country. Yet discriminatory practices have not normally been part of the actual habits or requirements of business enterprise. Industrial expansion, as we have seen, calls for labor, and the fact that a worker was black, white, Puerto Rican, or Mexican, always was, and might have been expected to remain, less important to the average entrepreneur than his skill or the amount of pay he demanded.

Three developments are intervening to modify this attitude. One is the unprecedented increase in the concentration of industry. In New York State, for example, one-tenth of one per cent of all employers now employ a full 30 per cent of the state's workers; elsewhere, whole cities have become dependent upon one or a few large industries. Thus many a personnel manager is in a position to limit drastically the hiring or promotion of thousands of members of a minority group by his arbitrary decision alone.

A second development has been the growth of unions. The progressive policies of most unions have advanced the opportunities of minorities, but some of them still maintain discriminatory policies that have the effect of banning an entire minority group from an industry or a trade—particularly the skilled ones.

The third development has been a tendency toward discriminatory hiring in answer to the pressure of city officials fearful lest changing the ethnic or racial composition of their neighborhoods invite social, if not political, problems, or require them to increase their public-education commitments. Today there is also a marked tendency to hire cheap agricultural hands from outside the country who will return to their

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places of origin after the season is over, or who can at least be corralled and sent back by force, and who will not move into the cities to take industrial jobs. As the president of a Florida group of growers who refused to hire native-born members of minority groups testified:

"The vast difference between the Bahama Islands labor and the domestic, including Puerto Ricans, is that labor transported from the Bahama Islands can be diverted and sent home if it does not work, which cannot be done in the instance of labor from domestic United States or Puerto Rico."

Because of the increasing number of such local tyrannies, many industries now tend to hire white labor exclusively—at least until the supply is exhausted; and to hire minority members only where there are nearby cities in which they can live in large numbers; thus countryside and suburbs are spared the expense or effort of providing homes for them. The Automobile Workers Union has won important employment rights for Negroes, but the mayor of Dearborn, where the major Ford plant is located, openly boasts of having "kept Negroes out of Dearborn," and has repeatedly sought, and won, re-election on the basis of this "accomplishment." Chicago, which has experienced a heavy Negro influx, has seen eight major race riots since 1945, but nearby Cicero, which had a major riot in 1951 when a Negro tried to move into the city, has successfully banned Negroes from its residential neighborhoods, though permitting their employment in its factories.

These three developments, along with the widespread practice of exclusion in housing, have markedly limited the freedom of opportunity and of movement which not only have always been among the most precious rights in our country, but have also been major factors in promoting social assimilation.

By contrast with the situation in purely private industries, the ethical issue for private enterprises that deal with the government—which has lately burgeoned into the largest single contractor in the economy—is quite easy to define. The government can and should see to it that the rules of democratic conduct are complied with by any firm to which it awards a contract. Such a measure, which the employer can take or leave (that is, he can refuse the contract), is far less drastic than across-the-board regulation against discrimination.

II

About the ethical responsibilities of public enterprises using public funds or power, there has never been any dispute. It has always been implicit in the American system that public agencies may not discriminate in the dispensation of their funds or powers; the powers they exercise, the taxes they levy, and the funds they expend belong to all the people, not just to one part or class. And no court and no responsible official in these United States has ever questioned the doctrine of the equality of all citizens under and before the law.

Yet an adequate new ethic embracing public and publicly aided as well as purely private agencies has still to be developed. Industry should have the freedom to hire anyone it thinks can do the best job, but not to ban or subordinate a whole group on the grounds of race, religion, or color. The Federal government is no longer the detached arbiter who intervenes only when business or faction has provoked the public conscience, effects a correction, and then is content to withdraw to the sidelines once more. Government now belongs to the very mechanism of enterprise, and those who benefit from its funds should abide by the ethical standards to which the government itself subscribes. States and cities, now the beneficiaries of vast Federal loans and grants for public works, housing, education, and social service, have a double obligation—as public agencies and as the recipients of Federal funds. States' rights have now given way to states' duties, and one of the most important of these is the protection of minorities.

Some states have, over the last ten years, risen to their responsibilities, setting up

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commissions against discrimination in employment and housing; and important gains have been made in breaking down resistance to the employment of minorities. But all such commissions have been hampered by lack of either power or funds. The laws are passed to satisfy the pressures of civic and minority groups, but then are hamstrung in their execution. (Thus the New York State Commission Against Discrimination has sixteen fewer employees today than it had eight years ago.) Few of these agencies may enjoin housing discrimination, and only nine actually have powers of enforcement. Legislators, often dominated by smaller communities fearing the influx of minorities, have opposed the granting of the required powers and funds.

A state agency's power is in any case less effective than would be that of a Federal agency, since some interstate employers may be in the position to claim immunity from state controls, while others can hire labor in states where no restrictions against discrimination in employment exist. Federal policy has not risen to this challenge, despite the expansion of Federal power, the rising concentration of industry engaged in interstate operations, the growing size of labor unions, and the increased number of public and private enterprises dealing with the Federal government or benefiting from its aid. Though power to act exists with Congress, with the Executive, and to a certain extent with the Supreme Court, progress has been virtually halted at all three levels. (The President's Committee on Government Contracts, which is designed to cope with discrimination in employment, has only fifteen employees and an uncertain budget of only $190,000, which is contributed by the very Federal agencies whose practices may be in question.)

THE brightest hope for resolving the ethical issues involving discrimination that have arisen in our new economy appeared for a time to lie with the Supreme Court. Though the Court cannot initiate action to check an emerging danger, its rulings in specific cases have often had a salient effect in defining the moral issues of a situation, and enjoining conduct contrary to public policy. And though the Court in an earlier period had evolved the "separate but equal" doctrine, it had also restrained oppressions against the Chinese minority and struck down racial zoning and other inequities. In the 1940's, with a more liberal membership, it moved toward bringing within the Constitution agencies benefiting from government aid or power. It enjoined race discrimination by a labor union which had been an exclusive bargaining agent under the Railway Labor Act, and described such a union as "clothed with power not unlike a legislature which is subject to constitutional limitations on its power to deny, restrict, destroy, or discriminate against the rights of those for whom it legislates. . . ." A "private" political party in the South which had admitted only white Democrats was barred from excluding Negroes. The Court refused to disturb a decision enjoining a privately run but publicly financed library from discriminating against Negroes. A large company town that owned all the town's facilities was held subject to Constitutional limitations on abridgement of religion, though the company was not operating with public funds.

More recently, courts were enjoined from enforcing racial covenants in housing; railroads and buses were barred from segregating their passengers. Thus the way was being paved for bringing agencies "affected with a public interest" under the same ethical standards as those which governed public agencies themselves.

In the egalitarian atmosphere pervading the immediate postwar era the Court, through a series of rulings, all but nullified the "separate but equal" principle in publicly aided enterprises, thus seeming to establish itself as the strongest protector of civil rights in the Constitutional system. The aftermath of the recent school decisions has, however, frustrated whatever hope there was that the Court would become the instrument by which the ethical concepts governing em-

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ployment in the purely private sector, as well as in the new public-private complex, could be raised. The power and prestige of the Court have been shaken to their foundations by an all-out attack on its decisions involving civil rights and liberties; and unless the tide turns soon, a serious mutation of the democratic structure may follow.

When in 1954 the Court finally held that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal," there was a tremor but hardly a cataclysm. Previous decisions and dicta seemed to have prepared the country, and the South, for the inevitable. When, thereafter, the Court heard argument on the issue of enforcement, most people took it for granted that its decision would be obeyed. Attorney General Herbert Brownell had urged the Court to remand the cases to the District Courts for enforcement under the high court's supervision, and in the closing paragraph of his brief had promised Executive support:

> The responsibility for achieving compliance with the court's decision in these cases does not rest on the judiciary alone. Every officer and agency of the government, federal, state and local is likewise charged with the duty of enforcing the Constitution and the rights guaranteed under it.

Nonetheless, a general impression has been permitted to grow that the Court has arrogated all enforcement to itself and that the two other levels of the Federal government can henceforth rest on their oars. The reluctance of the President and of the Attorney General to speak out on the issue of enforcement has not helped to dispel this impression.

The fact is that the Court, armed as it is solely with stenographers and attendants, has never been able to enforce its own decrees except in a very limited way, i.e. through contempt proceedings. These must be initiated by the party aggrieved, and there are few lawyers in the South willing to take the risk; and each of thousands of such proceedings would require elaborate and separate proof as to whether compliance was being effected with the "deliberate speed" required by the Court's opinion. Contempt orders, if obtained, may be enforced by a Federal marshal who can deputize lay citizens to help him or, if deputies are unavailable, call upon the Executive department. Such help may even have to be gotten from the military, since the Federal government does not have the authority to order local police or state troopers to back up its marshals. This is what has been played up as the threat of an armed invasion or a new civil war.

THE truth is that neither a Federal marshal nor troops can be depended on to make equality in education a reality, nor should their assistance be necessary. The Court's orders have been obeyed in the past because public opinion was usually behind the Court, and no one ever thought seriously of challenging it. And it was always assumed that the President would back the Court with his prestige, or, if that proved to no avail, with his economic power: when the Court ruled against the enforcement of racial covenants, President Truman (without waiting for Congress) immediately moved to condition all mortgage insurance upon the elimination of racial convenants. The President may also use his patronage powers, his power to aid states and localities in the many new fields in which the Federal government now operates; or he may invoke the vast influence he now commands in Congress and throughout the country. So too, the Attorney General can support the President and the Court, as he indeed promised to, by his own devices, which include intervention by the FBI and indictment under the Civil Rights Acts.

At a time when political measures to protect minorities seem more urgent than ever, both in North and South, the three Federal departments charged with the duty of taking action—executive, legislative, and judicial—seen unable or reluctant to do so. Yet where the public is led to believe that the Executive and community leadership are not behind a law, the machinery for its enforcement is bound to collapse or be in-

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effective. In the past the states tended to check the oppressions of the central government, the central government to check the oppressions of the states, and economic forces the oppressions of both. Today the threat comes from all three directions.

A Constitution drawn up in 1789 for a society on which the hand of government was to rest as lightly as possible is now confronted by a society where governmental powers and activities reach everywhere—into enterprise and into the daily lives of the people. And while the Executive fails to act, the judicial agency charged with adjusting the social and political responsibilities apportioned under the old Constitution to this new situation is under dire attack.

The civil rights issue may be politically disagreeable at the moment, but to ignore it, politically or otherwise, would be to endanger our whole system of government. Though presently highlighted in the South, the issue is as critical in the North, which is feeling the effects of the new minority migrations and the tensions they bring with them. One of the main needs of the time is to frame the issue in political terms. And a vital principle that needs expression now more than ever is that every increase in Federal authority must be accompanied by a corresponding increase in the safeguards against oppression. This implies not only stronger protection of civil rights by state and nation, but official support for the Court that has been seeking to carve these out. It means, also, the education of official agencies to new ethical responsibilities; the expansion of the Civil Rights section of the Department of Justice; the strengthening of the Civil Rights Acts; the development of sound social programs aimed less at aiding the entrepreneurs than at helping the new minorities to secure housing and improve their conditions. Above all, firm leadership by the President is needed to awaken the public conscience to the gravity of the moral questions involved.

By the expansion of governmental responsibility and authority we have effected a major revolution in the economic sphere and demonstrated our ability to preserve our people from the hazards of unemployment, mass foreclosures, and simple privation. But it remains to be seen whether we can maintain our fundamental democratic morality undiminished in the process. If we can, the example may impress the world as much as did the United States' proclamation of freedom, right, and justice in 1789.

ISAAC ROSENFELD

March 10, 1918 – July 14, 1956

Good Friend and Valued Contributor

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THE OREN CASE

A Fellow-Traveler Comes Home

WALTER Z. LAQUEUR

KIBBUTZ MISRA is one of the oldest collective settlements in the Jezreel valley, not a showplace perhaps, but a solid and neat little village. On the afternoon and evening of May 17, 1956, thousands of people in cars and trucks were streaming to Misra from all over Israel to take part in a great meeting. For a day or two, the small kibbutz had become the nerve center of the country. "Something had changed in us," A. S'dan, one of the founders of the kibbutz, was quoted as saying by the next day's *Al Ha-mishmar*. "All of a sudden, the skies had become bluer and the trees greener, the birds were singing with greater joy, and the members of Misra had grown younger." But emotion was not confined to the speakers. "Tears were in the eyes of many members of the public," *Al Ha-mishmar* reported. It was a great day in the history of Misra: the homecoming of Mordecai Oren after four and a half years in a Czechoslovak prison.

Of the many political *causes célèbres* in recent years, the case of Mordecai Oren is perhaps not among the most important. But it is undoubtedly one of the most fascinating, and one of the strangest, for it reflects in microcosm some of the great events of our time and their effect on various people.

MORDECAI OREN was born in 1905 in Podhaize, a small Galician town; in the early 20's he joined Hashomer Hatzair, the left-wing Zionist youth movement, and in 1929 he emigrated to Palestine. There he soon became one of the outstanding and most active members of the movement, which, in collaboration with several other groups, later founded the Mapam party. Oren represented Mapam in various capacities, and for a brief period he served in the Knesset, the Israeli parliament.

But his specialty was foreign relations. In the late 30's, during a short residence in London, he tried to gain friends for his movement among the leaders of the British ILP, men like McGovern, Maxton, and Fenner Brockway. After the Second World War the ILP suffered eclipse, while the Soviet Union and Communism became more fashionable. Now Mordecai Oren went on political tours each year, lobbying in European capitals, meeting left-wing socialists, Communists, and trade union leaders in various countries, taking part in sundry conferences, covering the Nuremberg trials as a journalist, trying to visit India—always on the move. Oren seems genuinely to have liked these roving assignments as an unofficial diplomat; a few of them, indeed, were self-imposed. Some observers believe that Oren's private diplomacy—a relic of the days of the British Mandate, when there could be no other kind—did his country more harm than good. But in fairness to him, it must be pointed out that such political travelers were found in all Israeli parties —they certainly were not a Mapam monopoly. Israel is a small country, depend-

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THE Oren case affords one of the most curious glimpses we have had, not only into what politics are like behind the Iron Curtain, but into the workings of the fellow-traveling mind. WALTER Z. LAQUEUR has appeared frequently in these pages in the recent past; in May 1956 we published his "The Moscow-Cairo Axis." He is an expert on Middle Eastern affairs, and was until a short while ago a political commentator on the Israeli radio. His recent book, *Communism and Nationalism in the Middle East,* is reviewed elsewhere in this issue. Born in Breslau, Germany, in 1921, Mr. Laqueur came to Palestine in 1938. At the moment he is on a prolonged stay in England.

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ing perhaps more than any other on good will and sympathy from abroad, to gain which all manner of unorthodox efforts have had to be made. Under the circumstances setbacks were probably inevitable.

In the autumn of 1951 Oren went to Europe on another of his tours. This time he attended a WFTU (the Communist World Federation of Trade Unions) meeting in East Berlin, and then passed through Prague on December 31, 1951, presumably on his way home. Then nothing more was heard of him until the end of March 1952, when the Czech Foreign Ministry informed the Israeli envoy in Prague that Oren had been arrested for having stayed on in Prague after his visa had expired. Today we know (from Oren's own account after his return to Israel) that his object on the trip to East Europe was to "enlist the help of the WFTU for the class struggle in Israel." In Prague he met a Soviet diplomatic representative and tried to convince him that Jews from East Germany and the Soviet zone of Austria should be allowed to emigrate to Israel; moreover, he intervened with the head of the Czech trade unions on behalf of two members of Hashomer Hatzair in Czechoslovakia who had been arrested by the Communists. Having booked his flight home from Vienna, he left Prague on a night train to the Austrian capital. Reaching the border at three in the morning of January 1, he was asked to step down from his compartment by the Czech border police. A small formality had to be dealt with—it would take only minutes. It took Oren and the Czechs four and a half years.

This was in January 1952, and a somewhat more astute political observer than Mordecai Oren would probably have perceived that conditions in East Europe, and especially in Czechoslovakia, had become rather unpropitious for unofficial diplomacy, however pro-Communist in inspiration. But Mapam leaders, and among them Oren, felt no such doubts: they defended Soviet policy in every respect except its coldness toward Israel and its equivocations on the Jewish question. As far as Mapam was concerned, if leading Communists had been brought to trial in East Europe, this proved that they were traitors; after all, had they not admitted their guilt? Oren and his comrades were firmly convinced that people with clean consciences had nothing to fear from Communists: socialist justice would always prevail.

At this very moment the Slansky trial was being prepared in Moscow and Prague. As distinct from preceding show trials in the satellite countries, Slansky's was directed not only against Titoism and the West but against "Zionism" and the "world Jewish conspiracy," and it was to be followed by the Moscow "doctors' plot" and a general purge (if not worse) of Jews in the Soviet orbit. This at least was what Stalin (not Beria, who was later made the scapegoat) wanted, and any of Stalin's Soviet or satellite henchmen who may have disagreed never dared say so openly. Only the death of the dictator cut short a train of events that might have led to the annihilation of what was left of East European Jewry.

Mordecai Oren and another Israeli, Shimon Orenstein, a businessman who happened to be in Prague at the time, were to be offered as the "missing links" between Slansky, world Jewry, Titoism, and the Western espionage agencies. But when Oren was arrested, the details of the "conspiracy" had not yet been worked out, and the Czech secret police still had not decided quite how to use him. During the first five days of his arrest he was mainly asked why he had intervened in Prague on behalf of Reich and Stern, the two imprisoned Hashomer Hatzair members. But shortly afterward a clearer pattern began to emerge: in a note to the Israeli envoy, the Czechoslovak government mentioned the "preventive arrest" of Oren in view of "hostile activities" during his stay in Prague. Israeli representatives, incidentally, were not allowed to see Oren in prison—a violation of international usage—until after the Slansky trial.

We do not know much about what hap-

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pened to Oren in prison. In the long report he wrote after his release (from which I have already drawn) he is very eloquent in discussing generalities but rather evasive on details, and somehow he manages not even to mention the main point of interest—his appearance at the Slansky trial. What we do know is that he was given the usual treatment accorded to political prisoners: kept for days in the anteroom of the investigating officer, not permitted to sleep, much of the time held incommunicado. He was told that his five-year-old son had fallen from a tree in Misra and been killed, that his wife had had a serious accident, that Mapam had been dissolved. He was given the barest minimum of food, and deliberately kept awake by a battery of investigators who took turns interrogating him until he broke down. He apparently was able to hold out for six months, since it was not until August 1952 that he wrote his wife Rega that he had committed some unspecified crimes against the Czechoslovak state.

In his report after being released, Oren said that what had perhaps hurt most during his ordeal was the feeling of complete isolation: he had assumed that his family and friends believed him dead, and he agreed to write the letter to his wife admitting his guilt because it was the only way he had of letting his dear ones know that he was still alive. Now he calls the means used to extract the confession from him "Gestapo methods"—but with only a furtive reference to *Rude Pravo,* which said in an editorial in April 1956 that it was Slansky who had introduced such methods into Czechoslovakia.

In November 1952 the Slansky trial finally began. Oren and Orenstein were produced from their cells as star witnesses and recited their parts in Czech (which they had been compelled to learn while in prison). Oren (described by Radio Prague broadcasting from the courtroom as "an international criminal who looks like an apache") admitted to having been a captain in British intelligence, to having spied and committed sabotage in East Europe on behalf of Zionism, Israel, the British Labor party (Messrs. Herbert Morrison and Konni Zilliacus in particular), Tito and Moshe Pijade of Yugoslavia, and to having acted as a contact man between all these and Slansky. Orenstein, the little merchant from Haifa, had moved in even more exalted political circles: he had been present, for instance, when the new Protocols of the Elders of Zion was signed in Washington by Ben Gurion, Morgenthau, Dean Acheson, and others. All this "proved" that Zionism, and world Jewry in general, were playing a most active part in the effort to overthrow the Communist regimes in East Europe.

THE events in Prague made a great stir all over the world, but the impact was nowhere more directly felt than in Mapam, Oren's party in Israel. These repercussions were at the time described at some length by the present writer (COMMENTARY, April 1953). Mapam split into several competing factions. One group led by Dr. Moshe Sneh was composed of confirmed Stalinists who demanded that Oren be disavowed and the anti-Semitic charges made at the trial accepted; this faction was subsequently expelled from Mapam and joined the Israeli Communists shortly thereafter. Another faction, headed by Riftin, Prai, and other stalwarts—Oren himself had been one of their number in better days—took exception to everything at the trial involving Oren, but excused the rest (including the anti-Semitism) as the necessary measures of a socialist state in protecting itself from its enemies. In the end, however, a majority led by Meir Ya'ari and Ya'akov Hazan declared—with a hundred reservations and qualifications, and while stressing their unending devotion to the Communist world of progress and peace—that both the charges against Oren *and* the accusations against left-wing Zionism were false. Ya'ari and Hazan eventually prevailed within Mapam, and many of the more radical pro-Stalinists in the party recanted. The whole issue, however, continued to bedevil Israeli politics for many months.

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But while these debates were going on, the Slansky trial had come to an end and Oren had been in prison for more than a year—and still had not been put on trial. Stalin died in March 1953, Gottwald followed him soon thereafter, Beria was overthrown by his colleagues, and there was much talk about the beginning of a new era, a "thaw." For Mordecai Oren, alas, none of these great events made any difference. The case against him proceeded as though nothing had happened. Four times he was compelled to sign confessions—and each time, he tells us now, he revoked his signature. What he finally pleaded we do not know, and it is of course of little consequence. But there was one thing he particularly saw fit to stress after his return: when asked to denounce Mapam, his own party, he said (or shouted): "Kill me, but I shall not sign." He had been willing to accuse himself and to implicate Israel. But to blacken his party—no: here he decided to make his last stand.*

Be that as it may, Oren was then preparing for his trial, and he relates with rather touching naivety the story of the witnesses for the defense he intended to call. First among them was Antonin Zapotocky, formerly head of the trade unions, now president of the Czech Republic. But it was, of course, beneath the dignity of Zapotocky to appear as a witness in the trial of a minor Jewish spy—even one he had known well for some time. Oren also wanted Louis Saillant, head of the Communist World Federation of Trade Unions. Instead of Saillant, however, some police official was brought forth who declared that Mapam was a reactionary party engaged in sabotaging the interests of the working class and progressive activities in general. Oren asked to have a "progressive" lawyer from Israel defend him, but this request too was refused. Instead, the Czech authorities gave him a government lawyer who acted, in Oren's own words, as the second counsel for the prosecution, and who "demanded not a just trial but just punishment for me. Which did not prevent him asking for his fee (600 kroners) after having successfully accomplished his task. . . ."

Oren's trial took place on an autumn morning in Prague, again in secret, and lasted less than four hours. About the writ of indictment (which ran to ten pages) Oren says that it included only one correct statement of fact: his name was indeed Mordecai Oren. As for the rest, it reiterated the charges of the Slansky trial: espionage, sabotage on behalf of the British and Israeli secret services, and so on. There were several witnesses; Oren tells us that he had never seen them before, nor did they know him. All the same, they testified that he was an enemy of the people. This would normally have been enough to draw the death sentence, but the court made it clear that it was in a benign mood. The accused, after all, had been brought up in a capitalist country and a lower-middle-class environment, and extenuating circumstances could therefore easily be found. So Oren was sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment, and was supposed to be grateful to the Czech judicial authorities for their wisdom and clemency.

To conclude this part of our story, it remains only to be reported that Shimon Orenstein had been given a life sentence several weeks before, and that the trials of Slansky's "accomplices" continued up to March 1954, when several Slovak Communists got long prison terms for "having tolerated Zionist activities and protected Jewish capitalist smugglers."

MEANWHILE in Israel Mapam did what it could to free Mordecai Oren but, unfortunately for him, the party leaders chose the most ineffective approach. They attempted to put "moral pressure" on the Communists in behind-the-scenes negotia-

*This part of Oren's report provoked considerable criticism in Israel and Oren decided to give a further explanation: he had been misinterpreted, "they put pressure on me in this connection but only at a much *later* stage in the investigation, when the investigators had second thoughts about using physical and mental terror and I myself had begun to recover and renew my strength . . ." (Jerusalem *Post*, June 1, 1956).

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tions, with such results as might have been expected. Moreover, they tried to enlist the help of Pietro Nenni, of Louis Saillant, of Lombardo Toledano, and several other prominent pro-Communists. But there was no sound reason to assume that these "progressives" would endanger their standing in the world of socialism for the sake of some obscure self-confessed Jewish spy. Paul Eluard, the late French poet, when asked to protest against the Rajk trial, gave the classical explanation of why in such cases non-intervention was called for: "I have too much to do for those who proclaim their innocence to occupy myself with those who proclaim their guilt."

Even their political foes in Israel cannot conceal a grudging admiration for the leaders of Mapam, Ya'ari, Hazan, and others, whose idealism and personal integrity make them among the most likable figures on the Israeli political scene. But their political judgment has never been commensurate with their fine qualities of character, and time and again they have made costly mistakes. In this particular case they should have known, on the basis of all their past experience with the Communist world, that there is one way, and one way only, to impress Communist leaders: brutal frankness and a bold determination to achieve one's aims whatever the cost and the consequences. But Mapam's leaders did not have the nerve of a Tito, and were afraid to venture alone into the political wilderness.

Israeli diplomacy also did what it could, but again possibilities for action were extremely restricted. Mrs. Rega Oren happened not to live under a Stalinist regime, and so she was not compelled to demand the death penalty for her husband (as the wife of Artur London, one of Slansky's "accomplices," was); nor were her children Fira and Moshe compelled to ask for it (as Thomas Frejka was forced to do for his father, Ludwig, another of the defendants). Instead, they sent a petition for amnesty to the president of the Czech Republic. The effective initiative, however, should have come from Oren's party. Lord Beaverbrook, the right-wing British press lord, succeeded in freeing political prisoners from Prague by a three-week newspaper campaign, but Mapam was unable to do anything in three years—and would probably never have succeeded had not the aftermath of the 20th Congress of the Russian Communist party brought about a change of atmosphere behind the Iron Curtain. Mapam's pro-Soviet enthusiasm, its participation in the Communist "peace movement," and its abstinence from open attacks on the Czech regime—all this proved to no avail, and perhaps served only to prolong Oren's ordeal.

For even Shimon Orenstein, who had vouched for the genuineness of the new Protocols of the Elders of Zion and had been given a life sentence for his pains, was pardoned twenty months before Oren went free. Noel and Herman Field and practically all other Western and Eastern "spies" were released in 1954 or at the beginning of 1955. And to make matters even more fantastic, while Oren languished in prison, Konni Zilliacus and Moshe Pijade, who were supposed to have used him as a contact man in their conspiracy with Slansky, made their peace with the Soviets. Zilliacus's articles were again published in Russian magazines, and Moshe Pijade, along with the rest of the Titoists, became a welcome guest in Bucharest and Sofia.

We may imagine, though we cannot know for sure, what went on in the mind of prisoner No. 2132 in his cell in Prague. "It was a question of signing or going out of my mind," said Oren after his release. "Had the alternative been death, I might have acted differently." Before his arrest he had said glibly that if a few Zionists were arrested in East Europe, it was probably because they had committed some offense against the state. He revised this opinion five years later, when he stated that Slansky and Clementis were undoubtedly innocent, and made various other admissions extremely detrimental to the prestige of the Prague regime.

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But how did Oren's own experience affect his basic political ideas? We have a very illuminating document, a letter written by him in prison in the summer of 1955, and transmitted to his wife in Israel apparently through unofficial channels. This letter reads in part:

> This last amnesty did not affect me. I am not a Czech citizen who escaped abroad to commit acts of espionage and sabotage. These men got an amnesty. But I am a patriot of the national liberation movement of my people, a left-wing socialist who has a positive attitude to the Soviet Union and the "Popular Democracies." For such crimes there is no amnesty. . . . I hope you are doing for me at least what Dreyfus's wife did when he was on Devil's Island. She had an important helper, Emile Zola. Pity that he isn't alive any more. Did you approach Louis Saillant and Lombardo Toledano? They know me and can testify that I am not a spy and traitor to socialism. . . . Rega, I strongly hope that you have signed the last appeal of the [Communist] "partisans of peace" for me. Here I cannot do it, for here I am believed to be a warmonger and enemy of world peace. . . .

Clearly Oren's admiration for the Communist system was not shaken. The injustice done him he attributed to some "decadent and rotten elements" that had gained a foothold in the Czech political police. ("If only Stalin knew!" many Communist prisoners used to say during the purges of 1936-38.) In his long report he tells us that during his last year of imprisonment he saw through the small window in his cell how everyone was being affected by a "great new upsurge." The leaders of state and party were fighting to destroy the "negative" elements which had impeded the great task of socialist construction in Czechoslovakia, and Oren had no doubt that in time they would succeed in restoring the country to its former moral level. Some of the evildoers, of course, were still left in responsible positions: when Oren wrote from prison to leading state and party organs in the summer of 1955 asking for a re-examination of his case—a privilege theoretically open to all prisoners—he got five months of solitary confinement. And at about the same time an official of the secret police came to see him with the news that he must give up all hope of amnesty, and that he would remain in prison until the very last day of his sentence—eleven or twelve more years.

By then, however, things were again in flux, and the decision on Oren (like many other decisions) was no longer within the competence of the Czech authorities. The Czech Communist leaders were under considerable pressure to re-open the case of Slansky and release their political prisoners. Rajk in Hungary and Kostov in Bulgaria had been posthumously rehabilitated, and Gomulka had been liberated in Poland; how long could a re-examination of Slansky's show trial be delayed? But though the Czech party leaders decided in favor of the releasing of political prisoners, they refused —from their point of view, quite wisely—to take any new action on Slansky.

For of all the show trials, Slansky's had been the greatest abomination. If the Zapotockys, the Bacileks, the Kopeckys, and the Cepickas ever admitted the truth, they would be hopelessly compromised, and it was clearly preferable to maintain the fiction of Slansky's guilt. He had been a Jew, an unpopular man, and a faithful Stalinist who merely happened to be on the losing side in the war of factions. In consequence, an ingenious new theory was invented according to which Slansky himself was somehow responsible for the perversion of justice at his trial.* The charges of Titoism (but not those of a Jewish world conspiracy!) were dropped. Eight of the eleven defendants

*Antonin Novotny stated in his report to the Czechoslovak Communist party conference (June 1956) that a commission entrusted with the task of re-examining the Slansky trial was still at work: "The examination is very complicated . . . the commission must inspect some 150,000 pages of documentary material." However, the investigation had so far resulted in the conclusion that "it was necessary to eliminate from the evidence everything concerning the Yugoslav comrades, the Fields, Zilliacus, and others. Without anticipating the final report, the examination has already established that there are no grounds for a rehabilitation of Slansky." Justifying this remarkable conclusion, Novotny said that in addi-

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had been hanged. Of the three remaining, Artur London, former Deputy Foreign Minister, was the first to be released (and reunited with his wife, who had so intensely wished to see him hanged). Vaclav Hajdu and Evzen Loebl, the other two, were freed later.

But in the release of these and other political prisoners the Czech Communist leaders showed that they were acting very unwillingly and only under strong outside pressure. All of the releases went unattended by publicity; none of the prisoners was restored to his former job or anything like it; and none has to this day been publicly exonerated.

We now come to the penultimate stage in Mordecai Oren's extended journey to East Europe. He was expected to be set free on May 8, 1956, the eve of the Czech national holiday, but for some reason there was another delay, and it was not until May 12 that the Czech Foreign Ministry called the Israeli envoy to announce Oren's release —and his immediate deportation from Czechoslovak territory. The news reached the Israeli Foreign Ministry at noon of the same day; Mr. Sharett (still in office at that time) phoned Misra and was the first to tell Rega Oren the good tidings.

The public was informed an hour or so later in a Kol Israel news broadcast, and immediately delegations from other settlements began to flock to Misra; the kibbutz telephone rang for hours without interruption, and there were spontaneous celebrations in Mapam kibbutzim throughout the country. "A pity you couldn't see the scene in Ramat Ha-shofet," somebody told Rega Oren. "The *chaverim* were so enthusiastic that they rushed out of their rooms in their underwear. And I never suspected that so much wine was hidden in the kibbutz, everywhere people were drinking" (*Al Hamishmar*, May 13).

Accompanied by the Israeli envoy, Oren left Prague on the morning of the next day. A few hours later he stepped down the gangway at Zurich airport, a free, sadder, but—as it would soon appear—not a much wiser man. He was wearing the same suit (and open collar) in which he had come to Prague in 1951, and he seemed somewhat surprised at the presence of so many reporters: "I thought I had been forgotten by all but my own family." He remembered that he had promised his son to bring back a football from his journey in 1951, and the Swiss customs authorities were willing to cooperate for once in procuring the gift.

After a day in Zurich, Oren flew back to Israel with the two Mapam leaders who had come to Switzerland to receive him, and it was a great triumphal return indeed: receptions, press conferences, public celebrations, and speeches, speeches, speeches. *Al Hamishmar*, the Mapam newspaper, which for several days was almost completely filled with the Oren story, began its report of the great Misra convention as follows: "The meeting of the five thousand became a most impressive demonstration to honor Mordecai Oren and to pay homage to him for his courageous, proud, unhesitant, and heroic stand. . . ."

Speaker after speaker went up to the rostrum with fulsome praise for Oren. Some of the poems Oren had written in his cell were read aloud. Then came his own long report, from which we have already quoted. It ended: "When I was released I examined the papers that had been returned to me. I found that my party membership card, which had been so important to me, had been confiscated. I would like to end my speech with the following two small re-

tion to the crimes for which he was sentenced, Slansky had committed a number of other criminal acts which were not even mentioned in the indictment against him! This proved too much even for the London *Daily Worker* to stomach. A cable from Prague (June 16) in the *Worker* reported that "with certain exceptions disappointing lack of wide criticism has been a marked feature of the National Conference. . . . Perhaps the biggest disappointment was the fact that those responsible for the mistakes and shortcomings made no attempt to say exactly what their errors were. There was a marked attitude of 'leave well enough alone.' Perhaps the Czechoslovaks expected too much [from this conference]."

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quests: that I be given a new party membership card, and that I be allowed to return soon to public life to take part in the great construction work, the Zionist-halutzic and the socialist revolutionary struggle." At this, there was a great commotion in the audience. Then Meir Ya'ari rose and said that though Oren had declared his readiness to return to public life at once after his long enforced idleness, "he should take one or two weeks' leave. I also propose that the party executive restore Mordecai to all institutions to which he belonged before his arrest." The proposal was unanimously accepted, with stormy applause. Ya'ari then proceeded to draw some conclusions from the Oren affair and all its ramifications.

Mapam had been faced, he said, with an ultimatum from each end of the political spectrum. Mapai and the Zionist Executive had demanded that the party give up all its ties with the Communist world; the Communists had demanded that it leave the Zionist movement. But Mapam had bowed to neither demand, and subsequent events had justified its course. Ya'ari went on to complain that Oren (and Mapam) had not been rehabilitated by the Communists, "though we too are members of the world peace movement." Since Oren belonged to the national liberation movement of what was considered only a small country, the injustice done to him might remain unpunished. But Mapam would continue to demand justice.

Neither Stalin nor the leaders of the Czech government that sent Oren to jail were mentioned in Ya'ari's indictment: the responsibility for the frame-up was put on Beria and those "Czech jurists."

This then, is where we leave the hero of our story: back in the kibbutz, reunited with his family, ready to return to public life, eager to represent his movement in Europe at some meeting of the World Peace Council perhaps, or the World Federation of Trade Unions, or maybe the equally Communist International Association of Democratic Jurists. He has borne his misfortune manfully, like a true philosopher; with Voltaire's Pangloss he can say that everything is for the best in this best of all possible worlds. For if he had not gone to Prague in 1951, if he had not been arrested and become involved in the Slansky trial, if Gottwald had not liquidated Slansky, if Stalin had not died, if Beria had not been overthrown by his colleagues—then Oren would never have been released and Communist justice would not have shone so brightly as it does today. *"Pravda vitezi*—truth will prevail," says the inscription on the Czech emblem of state. And real virtue is always rewarded in the end.

In Voltaire, however, Pangloss does not have the last word; the story ends with Candide's famous non-sequitur. "That is well said, but we must cultivate our garden." The same advice to settle down quietly in his kibbutz was given to Mordecai Oren by large sections of Israeli public opinion and the press, who found the character of the Misra celebrations somewhat inappropriate. But Oren did not like this counsel: "The institutions of Mapam have already decided what my role is to be in the national struggle in Israel. . . . There is one counsel which is, in my eyes, better than all this good advice taken together. In it, too, are not only my own 'wisdom and dignity' embodied but also the ideological and political collective will, rich in tradition and achievements which I am proud to have taken part in building and fighting for from my early youth—this is the counsel of the *authoritative* institutions of my movement" (Jerusalem *Post*, June 1).

IT HAS been difficult for the present writer to follow the long and complicated story of Oren, his exploits and tribulations, with complete detachment and equanimity. Originally a tragic event, the story has gradually taken on a certain aspect of farce. What did Oren do to deserve his hero's welcome? He was arrested in the first place because he did not have enough political sense to understand that East Europe in 1951 was no place for an amateur to dabble in affairs of state. He was compelled by his jailers to make the wildest accusations

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against himself, his movement, his government, his country. No one who has not himself suffered the same tortures of body and mind has the moral right to blame Oren for breaking down. He certainly deserves our sympathy—but hardly our admiration. There have been men and women who could not be broken under similar circumstances—and who were never brought to court. There was Traicho Kostov, the Bulgarian Communist leader, for instance, who in 1949 retracted his confession in the face of a raving Sofia courtroom.

And neither is the reaction of Oren and his friends to the wider political implications of his case a matter for enthusiasm. No one, of course, expected Oren to emerge from prison, say, a very religious man who had renounced all his socialist beliefs. But even on the basis of his own convictions as a Marxist, there were some pertinent questions which he should have asked himself and which he has conspicuously failed to. How could it all have happened? Was it really just a coincidence, the result of evil designs by the unspeakable Beria (or Stalin), who had wormed his way into an otherwise noble collective Communist leadership? Or was it perhaps inevitable in view of the totalitarian character of the regime? And without a change in the whole structure and character of the regime, would not the Berias and Stalins prevail again?

These and similar questions are nowadays asked even in Poland's secondary schools—but not by Mordecai Oren and his friends. As far as they are concerned, a tragic misunderstanding has (almost) entirely been cleared up. And they believe that such things can never happen again.

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JUDAISM AND THE HELLENISTIC EXPERIENCE

A Classical Model for Living in Two Cultures

MOSES HADAS

IF, IN looking back on the long Jewish past, the Hellenistic era appears to be more directly relevant to contemporary Jewish problems than any other period, it is because it was during that period that Jews first had to come to terms with the challenge of Europeanism. The responses they formulated at that time are *classic:* that is, they can serve as a gauge by which to assess later responses to the same challenge, and perhaps to correct deviations which have proven too extreme. This function of the classic—as a standard by which to understand and measure the present, and as a means of self-criticism—is universally acknowledged in the realms of philosophy and morality, literature and politics; the classical paradigm for the Jewish response to the world of Western humanism may be equally serviceable.

Hellenism became a problem to the Jews, and to all other non-Greek peoples, when Alexander the Great appeared on the scene and conquered the empire built by the Persians in the Near East. The cultural revolution set off thereby was as momentous for the life and thought of the ancient world as the discovery of America or the new Ptolemaic cosmology was for modern times. Prior to Alexander the world had been made up of disparate and isolated polities, each absorbing the total energies and loyalties of its members. Alexander's conquests made it impossible for the individual to rest in the belief that his polis was the center of the universe. With his cozy shelter stripped away, he was compelled to re-examine his loyalties and find his place in an enormously expanded world. It is for this reason that Hellenistic art, literature, and philosophy accord a new importance to the individual. And the essence of Alexander's policy as well as of Stoic doctrine—an ecumenical ideal, in which distinctions of race and geography would vanish and all men become members one of another—reflected the revolutionary changes.

It has been customary among scholars to consider these changes mainly in their Greek

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EVER since the emancipation of the Jews from their medieval disabilities and restraints, individual Jews, and Judaism as a whole, have had to wrestle with the problem of a right relation to the world around them. Most often, the choice is presented as one between "separatism" and "assimilation"—that is, between what many regard as a Judaism of parochial scope and interest, and the complete disappearance of Judaism and the Jewish group. But looked at historically, so simplistic an alternative may be seen as reflecting the experience of the later East European Pale and of the late medieval West European ghetto and ignoring such other possibilities of Jewish existence as were represented in medieval Spain and during the Hellenistic era. The Hellenistic experience in particular would indicate that the somber, extremely narrow character of the separatist Judaism of late medieval and early modern times was owed in some part to external constraint, not choice, and was not necessarily the only "authentic" Judaism. As MOSES HADAS notes in the essay following, normative Judaism may very well have had to sacrifice humanism to survive. But does Jewish spiritual survival still demand that price today? May it not even be that Judaism today *needs* humanism for the sake of Judaism? Dr. Hadas is Jay Professor of Greek at Columbia University, and the author of histories of Greek and Latin literature; he is also responsible for definitive scholarly editions of III and IV Maccabees, among other works. His last previous appearance in COMMENTARY was with "Vergil, Hebrew Prophecy, and the Roman Ideal" in November 1953.—Ed.

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manifestations, which are indeed easy to read. But the "barbarian" peoples on the periphery of the Greek world underwent a revolution at least as drastic. The new civilization they encountered through the agency of Alexander's armies was not only more attractive in many ways than their own, but (a more exigent argument) it had proved more successful in terms of political power. Consequently, they were faced with a need to adjust to the Greek spirit and with a temptation to assimilate to it, both of which impulses were encouraged by the program of Hellenization that Alexander and some of his successors promoted.

The main feature of this program was the establishment of cities on the Greek pattern, either in new foundations (as at Alexandria) or superimposed on old cities (Jerusalem itself was for a time officially called "Antioch"). Now, since the central institution of the Greek city was the gymnasium (which embraced literature as well as athletics), and "graduation" from the gymnasium was an indirect prerequisite for citizenship, many "barbarians" in Alexander's empire—including Jews—as citizens of the Hellenistic cities, must have been subjected to at least a minimum of Greek learning. (Needless to say, there were no Egyptian or Syrian gymnasia in Greece.)

The traditional picture of free cultural give and take between the Greeks and the conquered peoples is therefore wrong. In this respect the position of the "barbarian" world was analogous to that of the Far East in our own day. China and India, proud and tenacious of their own traditions as they may be, have had to adopt not only Western technology but with it a degree of superficial Westernization in dress and habits of thought, at the peril of complete mummification. But how deeply have Confucius or the *Bhagavad-Gita* penetrated Western thought? Even later Hellenistic borrowings of religious elements which we tend to regard as most typically Near Eastern are likely to be originally Greek ideas naturalized in the East and then returned to the West with different or heightened emphasis.

Yet communication between Greeks and Hebrews was much easier than the traditional notion has it. It has frequently been argued that the difference in spirit between the two peoples was so radical as to make the one utterly unintelligible to the other. The common contrast of "Hellenism" and "Hebraism," made famous by Matthew Arnold, assumes that all Greeks were rationalist worldlings and the Hebrews all unworldly pietists. Both pictures are certainly wrong. Though the most valuable part of the Greek legacy may indeed be the rationalism of a few of their thinkers, the truth is that the mass of Greeks—as books like E. R. Dodd's *The Greeks and the Irrational* and Walter Otto's *The Homeric Gods* make clear—were as continuously mindful of the supernatural as any people, and ritual observance entered into every aspect of their life. Nor, on their side, were the Hebrews wholly and exclusively preoccupied with their religion: if they had been, why should the prophets have found it constantly necessary to chide backsliders, or how could the Maccabees have won a war? There were of course fundamental differences between Greek and Hebrew religious beliefs, but they were not so profound as to make communication impossible. The real difference was not between the godly and the ungodly, but between two mixtures of godly and ungodly.

The spread of Hellenism among the Jews of the pre-modern Diaspora has always been acknowledged, but, again, the very recognition of this had led to another misconception —that the Diaspora Jews, by virtue of their contact with Hellenism, were a "Reform" minority, while those in Palestine, by virtue of their "purity," were the Orthodox. But the truth is that even before the Roman conquest, Diaspora Jewry was more numerous than Palestinian, and, furthermore, it never regarded itself as in any sense deviationist or under lesser obligation to religious tradition. It is not even certain that the Diaspora Jews participated more fully in non-Jewish life than their co-religionists in Palestine. But in any case, they never denied the validity of the religious law authoritative

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in their day, and they certainly never entertained the notion that their participation in "Hellenism" made them inferior as Jews.

Conversely, the traditional image of the Palestinian Jew as an unworldly devotee utterly untouched by anything outside the confines of Judaism is no less distorted. Jewish life in Palestine appears to have been far more deeply penetrated by Hellenism than has been suspected. Professor Erwin Goodenough's *Jewish Symbols in the Graeco-Roman Period* presents a mass of archaeological evidence to show that this was so—even in connection with synagogue buildings and burials, where pagan intrusions would have been thought impossible. And, as Dupont-Sommer has shown, the recently discovered "Manual of Discipline" among the Cave Scrolls, which was the code of the Essene-like brotherhood at Qumran, reveals details of organization and practice markedly like those of Pythagoreanism.

Indeed, all the non-rabbinic Jewish literature of the intertestamentary period reveals similar influence. Because rabbinic literature, which disparages or more often disregards the Greek influence, is looked upon as the main stream of Jewish teaching, scholars have dismissed that influence as insignificant. But we know that strong Hellenistic influences were felt in Palestine, and the very slighting of these in rabbinic literature may well represent a purposeful closing of the ranks after the fall of Jerusalem (70 C.E.), to combat a latitudinarian tendency in religion that was growing more and more dangerous. Philo, who made the first attempt in Jewish history to reconcile the Bible with Greek philosophy, cannot have been unique; he must have had peers and a considerable audience, even in Palestine itself. Rabbinic literature betrays no hint that such interests existed. It is hard to believe that this silence is accidental.

The most explicit testimony to the spread of Hellenism among the Jews is in just those books which narrate (in Greek!) what has been regarded as Judaism's war to the death against Greek domination. From I and II Maccabees it is clear that Hellenism had made great inroads, at least among the urban aristocracy, *before* the Maccabean insurrection against Antiochus (the revolt commemorated in the festival of Chanukah). That insurrection seems to have been as much motivated by nationalist (if the distinction is not too anachronistic) as by religious considerations. Religion, however, was used by Judah Maccabee as the battle-cry to rally the conservative rural and artisan classes to his standard and to consolidate the resistance against Antiochus. Antiochus's anti-religious decrees were promulgated *after* the insurrection broke out.

When the Maccabees had won and Judea was liberated from alien domination, the tie that had held such disparate groups together relaxed, and each went its own way. And when religious tolerance was secured, the pietist group, apparently a minority, withdrew from the struggle and the nationalist group alone proceeded to the next step of attaining political sovereignty. The chief concern of the Maccabean rulers from that point on was to win for Judea a respectable position as a Hellenistic kingdom among other Hellenistic kingdoms; religion seems to have been taken into account only as it identified the separateness of the Jewish nationality. That is why the Maccabean kings and priests are so cavalierly dealt with by the rabbis; Judah himself is nowhere mentioned in their literature. Vis-à-vis the Greeks, the Jews—both under the Maccabees and in the Diaspora—were a "barbarian" people like any other, and they reacted to the impact of Hellenism in the same way as the other "barbarian" peoples of the Near East did: with the desire to participate as fully as possible in Hellenism, while at the same time salvaging the largest possible amount of native tradition. The motivation for the first impulse is obvious: to deny Hellenism was to shut oneself off from the main stream of civilization. But non-Hellenes would still be despised (and might despise themselves) as barbarians, and therefore to bolster their own self-esteem and perhaps convince authentic Hellenes of

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their antiquity and high civilization, all the ancient peoples that had lost their sovereignty —Egyptians, Babylonians, Persians, and Jews —wrote books to glorify their past.

These books regularly set forth the ancient military prowess and wise laws of the people in question, frequently claiming (and this shows which way the wind blew) that the Greeks themselves, through Orpheus or Plato, had learned from *them*. Except for a few of the Jewish works of this nature (preserved not by Jews but by the Church), these apologetic writings are known to us only from fragments, but it is clear that the tenor of all of them was cultural survival *within* Hellenism. Though none of the peoples concerned translated Greek literature or presented Greek culture in their own language, all gave their native traditions a Greek dress and sought to make them acceptable to Greek audiences. (The significant exception was burgeoning Rome, which, though it too was a cultural province of Hellenism, translated Greek into Latin.)

A clear illustration of this tendency is *Aristeas to Philocrates,* a Jewish work written probably in Alexandria about the middle of the 2nd century B.C.E. Its ostensible, and probably principal, object was to describe the genesis of the Septuagint translation of the Pentateuch, but surely a collateral purpose was to set forth a desirable mode of relationship to the Gentile world. When King Ptolemy writes the Jewish High Priest asking for a panel of translators, he addresses him as a full equal, and the translators are received at his court with the highest courtesy. At the dinner parties given in their honor their dietary usages are respected—the King's steward has learned to respect the preferences of various guests—and their competence in philosophy arouses the admiration of the pagan philosophers present.

The object of all this is clearly to demonstrate to Jews, and to any pagans who might read *Aristeas,* that the most highly regarded of all Hellenistic kings valued the Jews and treated them as equals; but it also served, surely, to show the Jews that it was possible to share in the intellectual and even social life of their Hellenistic environment without compromising their religion.

A similar object will explain a puzzling pair of letters preserved in the twelfth chapter of I Maccabees. In about 144 B.C.E. (that is, just about the time of the composition of *Aristeas*) the Maccabee ruler Jonathan wrote, on behalf of the Jews, to "their brethren the Spartans . . . to renew the friendship and brotherhood" which had subsisted between the two peoples a century before. In witness of their old relations, Jonathan subjoined a copy of the letter which a Spartan king of the early 3rd century B.C.E. had supposedly addressed to a High Priest. The letter began as follows: "Arius king of the Spartans to Onias the chief priest, greetings: It hath been found in writing concerning the Spartans and Jews that they are brethren and that they are of the stock of Abraham; and now since this has come to our knowledge ye shall do well to write to us of your prosperity."

There is no reason to doubt the genuineness of Jonathan's own letter, but it does seem unlikely that a Spartan king would claim descent from Abraham. Yet Jonathan's chancellery need not have forged Arius's letter; it is altogether probable that the letter, spurious as it is, was already in existence, possibly as a part of a larger pseudepigraphon. The motive for the pseudepigraphon, as for Jonathan's own letter, is easy to explain; new and weak polities in the eastern Mediterranean regularly claimed kinship with older or stronger peoples, as the people of the Troad, for example, claimed Roman protection somewhat later on the ground that Aeneas came from Troy. The intended audience of the pseudepigraphon would be mainly Jewish, and, as in the case of *Aristeas,* its aim may well have been not only to persuade Greeks that Jews were respectable, but to persuade Jews that Greeks were too: for if Spartans were likewise descended from Abraham, the Jews might legitimately adopt some of their usages. Professor Elias Bickerman has shown that the Maccabees did in fact adopt certain Greek administrative pro-

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cedures, and the claim of kinship may have helped make them acceptable.

(This same wish to present one's own traditions in the most favorable light and to assimilate them to the dominant culture appears in the writings of other non-Hellenic peoples. In the *Ethiopian Romance* of Heliodorus [*circa* 2nd century C.E.] we read of an Ethiopian maiden whose surpassing beauty and virtue made her a suitable bride for no less a Hellene than one who traced his descent through a line including Achilles and a Gymnosophist priest who was so wise and saintly that he was received with high respect at Delphi itself. So skillfully written is the novel that the casual reader never suspects a propagandistic motive, but there can be no doubt that at least a subsidiary objective of the book was to win credit for a despised people and an obscure cult, and perhaps show the minority group that the Greeks were not always unappreciative.)

Administrative innovations were not the only Greek things that Jews found acceptable. In the Jewish spiritual life of the last pre-Christian century, two distinct movements took shape: the legalism which developed into what is called normative Judaism; and the apocalyptic speculations of Messianic triumph out of which Christianity arose. Both have been regularly deduced from Scriptural sources; legalism ultimately from the Mosaic legislation, and apocalyptic from isolated passages in the later prophets, with touches derived from the Babylonian captivity. But the differences between the developed legalist and apocalyptic tendencies and their presumed sources can be quite easily explained by the influence of Plato, who was the one Greek thinker familiar to all the Middle East.

The great monument of legalism is of course the Talmud, but whereas the prophets had regularly communicated truth by exhortation and pleading, with the cachet "Thus saith the Lord," the rabbis arrived at truth by what can only be described as a process of dialectic. If we seek for an external cause to explain the change from one mode to the other, none is so plausible as the dialectic of Plato. In apocalyptic visions of "the end of days," Platonic influence would seem even more tangible. There are adumbrations of the genre, to be sure, in the prophets, but the Platonic "myths," and especially the vision of Er at the end of the *Republic* (which may itself have been influenced by Eastern sources), are actually complete apocalypses, very like the Jewish examples in conception and imaginative elaboration.

The Platonic touch may be perceptible in the constitution of the Maccabean monarchy itself. The Maccabees were not in the High Priestly line, and certainly not in the Davidic succession, and their sovereignty had to be legitimized. There were other new dynasties which required justification, and representatives of the various philosophical schools busily wrote treatises *Peri Basileias* ("On Kingship") to provide them with a rationale. A favorite solution was to make the king *nomos empsychos*, "law incarnate," which is an echo of the Platonic authoritarianism set forth in the *Republic* and the *Laws*. On this point archaeology provides an interesting commentary. Our earliest pictorial representations of the Ark in which the Scrolls of the Torah are kept show a gabled structure upon a platform mounted on wheels; Hellenistic kings carried their statutes, which were the symbols of their authority, in just such structures when they traveled to hold court. Innovations like these cannot have been imposed by an external authority but must have been adopted voluntarily to meet new situations; and works like *Aristeas*, or the pseudepigraphon of which the correspondence in I Maccabees was probably a part, would offer a justification for them.

THE rapprochement with Hellenism which *Aristeas* advocated for Egyptian Jews, and which was certainly practiced in Antioch and doubtless reflected in Palestine itself, was halted by the Romans and by special measures taken by the Jews. Whether, and to what extent, the second factor was connected with the first is debatable. Egypt became a Roman province after the battle of

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Actium (31 B.C.E.), and at once the Jews of Egypt, who had enjoyed *de facto* if not *de jure* equality, were placed under certain disabilities. From this period we have another Greek-Jewish book written in Alexandria, the so-called Third Book of the Maccabees, which seems to be an intentional refutation of *Aristeas*. The story told here is that a Ptolemy had ordered all the Jews in his realm to embrace paganism on pain of death, and that his attempts to destroy them, when they proved intransigent, were miraculously baffled. The position now, in other words, is that no compromise whatever can be made with pagans or paganism.

But in neither *Aristeas* nor in III Maccabees is the Egyptian Jewish community envisaged as other than a permanent "orthodox" group. Widely as the two works may differ as to the range of permissible assimilation, the guiding objective of each still remains constant: participate in the life of the general community as fully as possible *and* retain the fullest possible loyalty to native tradition.

During the last century B.C.E., Judean kings were as ruthless and unprincipled in implementing their secular ambitions as kings anywhere have been. Independence ended in 63 B.C.E., when Pompey entered the Holy of Holies and reorganized the internal administration. Opposition to domestic tyranny and alien domination centered in pietist groups, and the Pharisees, who had been subversives (their title signifies "separatists") under Jannaeus and Herod, moved, in effect, from the left to the center of the political spectrum. When Titus (with Philo's nephew as his chief of staff) destroyed Jerusalem in 70 C.E. and even the illusion of sovereignty was extinguished, the Pharisees created a new thing in the world, a para-governmental polity based on religion —in effect a church. It exercised authority over a large area of the lives of its communicants, sent official representatives to carry its mandates and collect its tribute in a far-flung Diaspora, and could use excommunication to enforce conformity.

So long as there had been a secular Jewish government, however feeble, loyalty to Judaism need not have been exclusively religious; a man who lived by humanist ideals was none the less loyal. But when the religious became the sole authority, humanism became treasonable. This explains why synagogues and sepulchers could no longer bear pagan decorative motifs or Greek inscriptions, why Greek "wisdom" became anathema and Philo descended into oblivion, why the day the Septuagint was made was called accursed. The elements out of which normative Judaism was built had long been in existence, and had been shaped into similar structures under King Josiah in 621 B.C.E., and under Ezra in the 5th century; but it was the structure of normative Judaism erected in the 1st century that endured without essential change to modern times. Perhaps with less heroic measures Judaism would not have survived, but the heavy cost was the sacrifice of humanism.

Whether because like challenges evoke like responses, or simply by imitation, the Catholic Church developed an ecclesiastical polity that was equally hostile to humanism. In the Senate house at Rome there stood a statue of Victory which was in fact little more than a symbol of Rome. The statue was removed by Constantine in 357, restored by Julian called the Apostate, and again removed by Gratian in 382. The humanist sympathizers, with Symmachus as their spokesman, pleaded that the statue need offend no man's religion, for it was a *nomen* (name, symbol) rather than a *numen* (divinity), and as such all men could acknowledge its worth; it symbolized the cultural values which mankind had accumulated over the centuries and of which Rome was the guardian. The powerful St. Ambrose intervened, the humanists' plea went unheeded, and Europe entered the Dark Ages.

An objective spectator finds the emergence of a powerful and authoritarian church out of the simple and gentle teachings of the Gospels paradoxical. Perhaps the transformation in Judaism which took place at the same time is no less so.

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TWO POEMS

CHARLES GAINES

Now Song

Now is the time of this house and this tree,
Now is the time of this storming and lamplight,
But the kiss we broke in a weeping of rain
Is gone as the seconds and seasons
That vanish in a turning of earth.
And we, carved here in the rain laughing
In a few more trips around the sun
Will gasp just once and fall in a motion of mud.
What then will be our worth within the earth
Or what small thing between our fall and birth
Will we have done to let them know we lived?
Or must we slip from them unknown
As this kiss slips from our lips
Unknown to this tree in the raining?
Now is the time of this flower
That opens its throat to the storm,
Now is the time of your beauty and my aggressiveness
Here in the rain of the spring arc
In an angle of sunlight
Lost in a cluster of stars.
But our coming here in the rain is a danger,
For out of this, a hope is born
And we who cling so tenaciously
Dream of eternity, dripping with love.
Now is the time of this watch
Ticking our lives in the storm,
Now is the time of this hour and this minute,
But the kiss interrupted by a weeping of rain
Must be our measurer of time
And the heartbeat our metronome,
Then we might say, It is quarter to a kiss
Or, It is five heartbeats to dinner.
And we will know, that, should we meet deletion,
That we had Time, Seasons, and Suns at our tongue tips
And found the truth between these Tears and Stars.

Lost Heritage: II

And who is this that sells the hot tamales, what shattered voice is this, what modern screamer
what Godless one is this that heralds the morning
with broken sighs and oaths and kissless lips?
Must this one scream the horrors of the world
or break his voice against the terrible nights
that roll in from the animal core like waves
crashing upon the rocks of barren shores?
Is this the one whose laughter fills a room
like air or gas compressed and then disturbed
when in the evening some foul thought is caught
between a sip of tea and spoon of beans?
Or does he weep behind a mask of laughter,
cough little bits of laughter over tears
to keep the darkness of his morbid soul
from weeping out the windows of the world?
Does this one bunion home toward the evening
to break a kiss upon some woman's lips
amid the stench of cabbage, grease, and dirt,
a blasting radio and bawling baby?
If this is him then bless him destiny,
pull down the lids across his sleepy eyes
for if he wakes while all the others doze
he'll only waste his life behind a wall.

The first published poems of Charles Gaines, a young Negro writer, appeared in our issue of January 1954. Born in Baltimore in 1924, Mr. Gaines now lives in New York City. This summer he is working at a Jewish camp for children.

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POLITICS AMONG THE ARABS

Illusions of Progress, Delusions of Grandeur

GEORGE LICHTHEIM

NO APOLOGY is needed for dealing once again with the subject of Arab nationalism. Whether one thinks of the Middle East in general, or of the special issues raised by Israel's relations with her neighbors, the topic is unavoidable. The difficulty lies in making Arab nationalism palatable to people who like such things flavored with a seasoning of humanist ideology, liberal or socialist. This is not an easy matter, for the Arabs (as their spokesmen have gradually discovered) are not in themselves an attractive people by Western liberal standards. They seem to lack the moral dignity of the Indians, and unlike the Greeks they make no appeal to the Western sense of history. A little unfairly, the average European or American tends to associate them with what he vaguely remembers about the Orient, and the adjective "Oriental" is commonly prefixed to nouns like "duplicity," "cruelty," and "servility." Whether justified or not, such associations undoubtedly tend to establish a certain prejudice in the minds of the best-intentioned Westerners.

It is not uncommon these days to hear pro-Arab Westerners or Arab intellectuals with a liberal upbringing and outlook complain about Western prejudice against the Arabs. Now and then they are even echoed by Zionists or Israelis who feel that it is not to Israel's long-term advantage to keep herself culturally isolated from her neighbors. On the other hand, there is the difficulty that those enlightened Arab intellectuals one occasionally meets who would seem to speak for a liberal Arab nationalism are notoriously unrepresentative and politically without influence in their countries of origin—which may be the reason why they tend to migrate to places like Oxford. (On closer inspection they frequently turn out to be Christians who do not get on too well with their Moslem fellow Arabs, or secularists who frankly prefer the intellectual fleshpots of the West to the mental fare at home.)

WALTER Z. LAQUEUR'S *Communism and Nationalism in the Middle East* throws a good deal of light on the forces which have shaped Arab nationalism and rendered its latest manifestations so disconcerting to Westerners brought up on the 19th-century liberal-national synthesis made notable by names like Kossuth or Mazzini. Arab nationalism decidedly is not liberal; neither, one may rejoin, is the modern nationalism of Turkey, for all that Kemal did away with Islam as a state religion. But there is this important difference: the Turks never lost their independence and are consequently free from the peculiar curse of nationalism —the desire to be revenged on one's oppressors, real or imaginary. When they had ceased to be the dominant group in the old Ottoman Empire, they promptly made the transition to independent nationhood. The Arabs by contrast, after putting up for centuries with Turkish overlordship, found

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ONCE again: nationalism in the Middle East. The book discussed here by George Lichtheim, *Communism and Nationalism in the Middle East* (Praeger, 362 pp., $6.50), is from the pen of one of COMMENTARY'S regular contributors, Walter Z. Laqueur, an article by whom appears elsewhere in this same issue. Mr. Lichtheim, too, hardly needs an introduction in these pages, to which he has contributed numerous articles and reviews. Like Mr. Laqueur, he was born in Germany, brought up in Palestine, and now lives in England. His last previous appearance in COMMENTARY was in June of this year with a review of Louis Fischer's *This Is Our World*.

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themselves passing under the control of Western nations like Britain or France, and thus in a manner worse off. For in the Ottoman Empire they had at least been the social equals of their fellow Moslems, the Turks, though the latter tended to monopolize power (rather in the manner of Moscow commissars ordering non-Russian Communists about).

Under Western rule, the Arabs felt helpless and despised. An Arab notable in the old days was at home even in the Constantinople of Abdul Hamid, where people in disfavor with the Sultan had a way of disappearing without trace. The same man's descendant, living under British rule in Cairo or under French control in Casablanca, felt a little like a stranger in his own country. Not surprisingly, Arab nationalism displays an unmistakable note of mortally wounded *amour propre* and a corresponding resentment of the West. The passionate indictment of "Western oppression" has its comic side, for of course the real oppressors of the Arabs for centuries were the Turks, whom few Arabs seem to hate; but then they were fellow Moslems. It is always easier to put up with the ill-treatment if it stays, so to speak, within the family. Being ruled by foreigners whom one secretly envies and who condescend to one's cherished traditions (if indeed they notice them at all) is a more souring experience.

If this were all, it might still be possible to rely on the healing influence of time to make the newly independent Arab or Arabic-speaking countries get over their accumulated sense of grievance. Unfortunately, the factors that made for Turkish misrule in these countries now make for Arab misrule; and misrule breeds tensions which find an outlet in a relentless search for scapegoats. Modern Arab nationalism is not merely xenophobe, but inclined to view the remainder of the world as a source of conspiracies aimed at making the Middle East once more subservient to outside powers.

The chief of these "conspiracies," of course, is the "imperialist" one, aided and abetted by the "Zionist." Israel itself is regarded as the fruit of an elaborate plot hatched somewhere behind the scenes of the Western world. The Arab mind runs easily to such fantasies, and the Russians—themselves not at all disinclined to attribute occult power to "Wall Street"—are doing nothing to disabuse their new protégés. If Soviet envoys nowadays find such a ready welcome in Middle Eastern capitals, not the least cause must be sought in their ability to exploit a latent strand of nativist distrust of all things Western. It may be that in the long run the Russians will attract some of this perennial suspicion to themselves, simply by being there and affording a target; but for the moment they are having an easy time cashing in on the Arab sense of grievance—a motivation so powerful that an otherwise unpopular dictatorship like that of Colonel Nasser in Egypt can afford to dispense with almost every other form of support.

It is the principal merit of Mr. Laqueur's scholarly study that he not merely brings these facts home to the reader, but fills in the political background common to the ruling Arab nationalist forces and their Communist rivals. Most current writings on the Middle East are innocent of the particular form of sophistication required to get these cross-currents into focus. Their authors either concentrate on socio-economic foundations, which are treated as passive raw material for "development" schemes; or else they tend to get bogged in the complexities of Middle Eastern politics. What is lacking is a sense of the structural character of the changes now going on—changes to which both nationalists and Communists are having to adapt themselves while seeking to control them.

Indeed the very notion that there may be a political structure peculiar to the Arab world seems to run up against some hidden resistance. The Communists, of course, are not inhibited by this intellectual weakness, though they suffer from others. Unlike their

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Western opponents, they are not afraid to theorize, being persuaded that theory is essential to practice. They are, moreover, helped by the fact that the Russian Revolution has made its biggest impact on countries more backward than Russia—among them the Middle Eastern lands. This is now beginning to be recognized, but readers of Mr. Laqueur's illuminating study (and particularly of its appendix dealing with the evolution of Marxist-Leninist thought on the subject of Oriental society) will discover with some surprise how far the majority of Western specialists still have to go before they catch up with their Soviet rivals in the field of applied sociology.

There is no point in trying to summarize a mass of information compressed into more than three hundred tightly packed pages of text, much of it dealing with subterranean plottings and complex factional disputes among the minuscule Communist sects of the region. Instead, it may be useful to try to disengage the broad outlines of the argument from the factual material dredged up by the author. Specialists will busy themselves with his detailed accounts of Communist party histories from Egypt to Persia (including Palestine-Israel, where the party was constantly racked by the Arab-Jewish cleavage in its own ranks). The ordinary reader looks for light on the question whether the Communists have a chance of capturing the Arab national movement. The answer appears to be: "Yes, but there is nothing fatal about it." There are rival Arab movements in the field, none of them very attractive by Western democratic standards, but some of them conceivably able to compete with the Communists without themselves falling into a different form of totalitarianism. It is even possible to envisage a situation in which these movements, and the governments they support, will not spend *all* their time and energy contemplating a war of revenge against Israel. But it must be added that these hopes are rather long-term.

Who or what, then, are these movements, and what kind of choice do they offer to the more or less literate public to which they address themselves? It is important to see this issue in relation to the decline of liberalism. As Mr. Laqueur pertinently observes, "Western liberal nationalism never did have any deep roots in the Moslem countries, though a small upper class was fully Westernized and the constitutions of some countries, such as Egypt, were modelled on the Western European pattern. . . . The nationalist inspiration that these countries received was thus mainly of the post- and anti-liberal era. This nationalism is distinguished by the over-estimation of one's own nation and the denigration of others . . . and a general tendency to attribute anything wrong with one's nation to the evildoing of others. . . . The teachings of Fascism and National Socialism, as well as the Soviet theory of Russian superiority in all fields, have had more influence than the earlier liberal-democratic brand of nationalism."

Is this too harsh a judgment? A well-meaning outsider might think so, and yet it is substantially echoed by critically minded Arab intellectuals. Thus Walid Al Khalidi, writing in the June 1956 number of the British publication, *The World Today*, comes to more or less the same conclusion, though he phrases it more cautiously. He sees the political scene in the countries of the so-called Fertile Crescent (from Syria to Iraq) as still dominated by an older generation of "traditional Arab nationalists" belonging to a "vague nineteenth century school of liberalism," "secular in outlook and basically pro-Western"; and he then makes it clear that he regards their cause as lost. They are, he points out, yielding increasingly to right-wing and left-wing movements united by a common distaste for liberalism: Communists, Socialists, Moslem Brethren, and—strongest of all at the moment—supporters of what he rather infelicitously describes as "Nasserism," i.e. military dictatorship with a touch of social demagogy. Before this hydra-headed challenge the older generation of politicians is proving helpless:

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"They are representative of the old aristocratic families of the towns, and the feudal and tribal chiefs of the countryside. They are also in alliance with powerful local industrial and commercial interests. They are the Middle Eastern group upon which Western policy is based. Everywhere they are on the defensive and in some countries in thinly camouflaged rout."

This accords with Mr. Laqueur's analysis. In fact there are today few observers who do not (in private at least) echo these utterances. Where Mr. Laqueur differs from Mr. Khalidi (and where this reviewer is inclined to agree with him) is in seeing no great future for "Nasserism." It may be significant that so many Arab modernists have come to place their remaining hopes on the Egyptian dictator, but this is surely evidence of an acute embarrassment over the current state of affairs in the Arab world. Colonel Nasser has already demonstrated conclusively that he is no Kemal. The job of democratizing Egypt's social structure is evidently beyond him; instead, he prefers to rattle his new Russian tanks. Yet he clearly appeals to something latent in the minds of the new urban middle class, and it is only the eventual failure of his experiment that will drive his present well-wishers among the intelligentsia into some sort of Popular Front—or straight into the Communist party.

The latter, needless to say, urges him on—in a spirit worthy of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact—to ever more hazardous military adventures, confident of its own ability to reassemble the pieces after the inevitable crash. And in this strategy it is only seconded by groups such as the Ba'ath, or Renascence, party in Syria—more or less socialist but, *pace* Mr. Khalidi, far from "Marxist." Both Communists and "Socialists"—"National-Socialists" would perhaps be a better title—clearly expect to profit from the collapse of military dictatorship, and the ensuing civil war.

What is there in all this to justify the pious expectation, now so popular in advanced circles as well as among the more modern-minded representatives of Western officialdom, that the Middle East will, after an interval of storm and stress, shake down to a reasonably democratic state of affairs? Nothing at all, if one does not allow oneself to be blinded by sentimental prejudice in favor of peoples rightly struggling to be free. Islamic soil is even less favorable to democracy than Latin American, and how much democracy is there in Latin America? It will be a considerable achievement if Israel can be preserved, and Turkey prevented from slipping back into authoritarianism.

Outside these two areas the best one can hope for is that the great powers, including the USSR, may find it to their common interest to refrain from scattering too many arms around. If they could be induced to set up a condominium over the area—tactfully veiled so as to spare Arab nationalist susceptibilities—it would at least be possible to count on a period of peace and quiet. But that is probably too much to hope for. With so much tinder lying around—and what is worse, so much oil—it does not take a great deal of bomb-rattling to set off a conflagration, and nationalist passions run so high in all the Arab lands that even the shoddiest of military regimes can count on popular support for war—initially at least, i.e. until the military chickens come home to roost.

To return to Mr. Laqueur's analysis. It is sometimes objected by conservative writers that the pessimistic view takes too little account of the constructive work now being done in many parts of the region by government, private firms, and development boards. Iraq, on account of its oil royalties and their investment in canalization and reclamation, etc., etc., is invariably mentioned in this context. In a generation, we are told, it may be the leading country in the Middle East—wealthy, stable, and governed by conservatives—with turbulent Egypt left far behind. This is now the favorite theme of British statesmen and publicists, and for all one knows, it may shortly become the latest American discovery. The fly in the ointment is non-economic and therefore in-

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visible. "Of all the Arab countries," observes Mr. Laqueur very justly, "Iraq arouses the strongest feeling of pessimism." This remark has already caused eyebrows to be lifted all around. Sir David Kelly, an elderly oracle of conservatism, protested in the London *Sunday Times,* and pained expressions were visible elsewhere, for Iraq is now the last bulwark of authoritarianism, "moderation," the Baghdad Pact, and Anglo-American strategy generally. And yet, what Mr. Laqueur says is the merest truism.

There may be sound arguments for regarding Iraq's economic future as relatively hopeful, but the idea that the present regime can keep itself indefinitely in the saddle with the help of oil royalties and the police is somewhat naive. A government so patently committed to defense of the landed oligarchy and contempt for the new middle class (to say nothing of "the masses") must sooner or later provoke an explosion. To counter "Nasserism," let alone Communism, it would have to do what by its nature it is incapable of doing: promote the "development" of the country not in cooperation with, *but at the expense of,* the propertied classes—even if this should be socially wasteful and economically irrelevant. For there is no other way of acquiring a firm popular foundation. But conservative regimes run by elderly statesmen and supported by foreign oil companies are not given to this kind of radicalism. "Hard-headed common sense" is what makes them so appealing to foreign investors and military men—until the day of reckoning. Iraq is a case in point. The crash there, when it finally comes, will be not merely spectacular but bloody. Until then the government of Nuri Pasha es-Said can count on a favorable press, and a discreet trickle of Western arms.

Mr. Laqueur has performed a service in stating these issues in an uncompromising manner, and documenting his analysis with an impressive display of specialist knowledge on the subject of Communist-nationalist interpenetration. The experts will find it difficult to ignore him. Whether the fashionable publicists and policy-makers will benefit from his work is another matter. In all probability they are by now too deeply committed to their peculiar brand of *Realpolitik* to shift gears in time. In any case it seems likely that the near future will present us all with a series of unpleasant surprises.

As for the present generation of Arab nationalists, it must be confessed that one sees little hope for that political and cultural renascence which is held out to us as the distant goal of current aspirations. The unpleasant fact about the Arabs—that they are a decayed ex-*Herrenvolk,* who, unlike the Turks, have not come to terms with the real world—is seldom stated in private, and never in public. Westerners have grown chary of judgments liable to upset the possessors of oil fields, and Israelis are rightly reluctant to add to their own difficulties by picking an ideological quarrel with neighbors among whom they must somehow contrive to live. And yet the cauterizing effect of such a truth, once uttered by a responsible statesman (preferably an Arab leader with an unimpeachable record of national constancy), would go far to remove the poison from the mental injury suffered by the Middle East since its first encounter with the modern West—to say nothing of the additional injury done to Arab self-esteem by Israel in 1948.

The worst enemies of the Arabs are those well-meaning Westerners who go on telling them that they are a great people and potentially the core of a renascent Middle Eastern culture. The truth is that they are neither, but it will take yet further setbacks and disappointments before an Arab leader has the courage to do for them what Kemal did for his people: destroy their illusions and bring them back to reality.

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ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND FACULTY STATUS

A Redefinition

RALPH G. ROSS

FROM the top of a hill one may see everything for miles around, except the top of the hill. From the vantage point of the liberal arts college, scholars survey all time and space except the liberal arts college. That has been left to professional schools of education, and, quite properly, they have been interested in education itself rather than in the institution which houses and purveys it.

In consequence, we know a great deal about curriculum and its relations to state, church, and society, but too little about the university as a social, political, historical, and economic institution. We know a great deal about the avowed aims of universities, but less about why and how they develop. And that development has been considerable. When King's College, now Columbia University, first opened its doors, it advertised in the New York *Gazette* that it intended to teach students ". . . to know God in Jesus Christ . . . and to train them up in all virtuous Habits, and all such useful Knowledge, as may render them creditable to their Families, and Friends, Ornaments to their Country, and useful to the public Weal in their Generations." Today Professor Robert M. MacIver of Columbia writes in his book, *Academic Freedom in Our Time* (Columbia University Press, 1955), that ". . . the special function of the university is to extend and to impart knowledge."

For two such vastly different aims, different rules and procedures are necessary. For the former, it was not important that the faculty be allowed to pursue its research freely and state its conclusions frankly. For the latter it is. For the former, it was necessary that every faculty member hold a particular philosophy. For the latter it is not. Even the requirements of scholarship have changed. When one imparted eternal principles, he was not expected to alter or add to his beliefs. But when one states the conclusions of research, he is expected to change as research changes and to contribute to it.

THE American university is unique. Only in the United States and Canada are modern universities governed by laymen. The European rector is elected by the faculty, often for a short period of time, but our college president is appointed by a lay board and may remain for life. So the American professor, unlike the lawyer, doctor, and engineer, cannot fully set the standards for his own profession. He is always somewhat at the mercy of people whose chief concerns and fundamental loyalties may lie elsewhere, and whose training rarely qualifies them for a post at the university they govern.

Nor does the professor have a traditional code to rely on. Guarantees of freedom are very recent. To be sure, the medieval uni-

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WHO, and what, threaten academic freedom? And what are our professors really unhappy about? These are among the questions RALPH GILBERT ROSS sets himself to answer here. Mr. Ross is professor of humanities and chairman of the Humanities Program at the University of Minnesota, and previously taught philosophy at New York University and Queens College. Born in New York City in 1911, he took his B.A. at the University of Arizona, and M.A. and Ph.D. at Columbia. Besides contributing to many magazines—*Partisan Review, New Republic, Public Opinion Quarterly, Journal of Philosophy*—he is the author of *Scepticism and Dogma* (1940) and of a book provisionally titled *An Introduction to Contemporary Society*, which is to be published shortly. This is Mr. Ross's first appearance in COMMENTARY.

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versities had both freedom and power beyond anything we have known. They were self-governing corporations which instructed not just their students, but even king and Pope. So great was the prestige of the University of Paris that in 1626 the civil authority prescribed the death penalty for anyone who published anything without that university's authorization. It was earlier, though, that the university enjoyed its greatest freedom, when it could appeal from Pope to king, and from either to the Bishop of Paris or the Parlement of Paris. Local authority was hard to overcome. The condemnation in Paris of the beliefs of Thomas Aquinas, for example, was not retracted by the Bishop of Paris until 1325, two years after Thomas had been canonized. And if the worst came to the worst, if the faculty could not get what they asked, they would declare a cessation—simply a strike—during which they taught no classes.

With the growth of secular power in the Renaissance, and the corresponding decline of church power, the autonomy of the university was limited considerably, and with the Reformation it received its *coup de grâce,* not to be reborn until the mid-19th century. Churches became national, and subordinate to the Crown. It was the king who decided what faith his subjects should profess and what doctrines his professors should teach. When Lutheran opposition to Aristotle became a real force, the Duke of Prussia banned the study of that philosopher at the University of Königsberg, and in a short time all real study of philosophy was suppressed.

The early American university, still under the influence of the Reformation, was more concerned with maintaining and propagating a faith than with science or what we regard as scholarship. The first of our universities, Harvard, was Congregationalist. So was Yale. One of the reasons that Princeton was founded was to educate Presbyterians. Both Congregationalists and Presbyterians were Calvinists, and although some people deplored the bias against Presbyterians in one place and against Congregationalists in another, it was by no means widely believed that all Protestant students should mix freely. Catholics and Jews, of course, were beyond the pale; the former founded their own schools. Episcopalians, being of England's dominant faith, were rather severely discriminated against by people whose dissenting ancestors had fled England. King's College, therefore, had to be opened for the education of Episcopalians.

EVEN today, the great private universities bear the marks of the religious schisms and disputes that dominated their beginnings. Many of them have a *numerus clausus,* a clause restricting the proportion of students of certain kinds, usually Negroes, Catholics, and Jews. And in the thoroughly secular state universities it is still rare for Catholics, and almost unheard of for Jews or Negroes, to attain administrative posts of any importance. I believe that there has actually been only one Jewish college president in a major non-Jewish American college in our entire history. (He himself tried to maintain in one of New York's city colleges the unofficial requirement that no department be staffed by more than one-third of Jews.) There are very few Negro faculty members of any rank outside Negro colleges, and Negro colleges have, on the whole, been unable adequately to train students for graduate work or, ultimately, for university teaching.

But the demand for academic freedom that we hear being so loudly made today is *not a demand to rectify these conditions,* which are almost never mentioned publicly. Academic freedom is understood as freedom (to be specified later) for a man who *already* holds a faculty post, not as the freedom to acquire one *purely on the basis of merit.*

Also, academic freedom no longer has anything to do with students. Since the student obtained his freedom long before the teacher did, and since reprisal has lesser consequences for the student, it is the teacher's freedom to say what he believes which is threatened in times of crisis. A student

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can only be expelled, and there are lots of other schools to attend. But if a teacher loses his job, it is not always easy for him to get another. Student and faculty freedom, further, do not necessarily go together; there have been many instances of free student bodies and bound faculties, and a free faculty may be very rigid about the behavior of students.

Nor does academic freedom necessarily develop with civil liberties. There was much academic freedom in the late Middle Ages and little civil liberty. There was much civil liberty in the early 19th century and little academic freedom. This alone is sufficient to show that the two have been treated differently. And they are different. Civil liberties are those which are required by the political process: freedom of speech, the press, assembly, and so on. Academic freedom includes those liberties necessary for the academic process: essentially, freedom of inquiry and freedom to state one's beliefs in the classroom. In a democratic country the electorate can, through the use of its civil liberties and its power at the polls, decide what other liberties citizens should have. The extent of our freedom as inhabitants of a democratic country is thus determined by ourselves. Academic freedom, however, does not bear on the academic political process (how the university governs itself) but only on the educational one. So it has little effect on the other rules of the university which govern the faculty's lives.

FREEDOM of any kind grows out of social and political conditions that rarely were created deliberately for the sake of the freedom they yield. Freedom has seldom been granted just because people wanted it. It was usually the result of circumstances that made it useful to society or its rulers at a particular time. Often freedom exists only in the interstices of authority, in the cracks and crevices of society into which authority has not yet fully penetrated. There are perhaps four conditions under which freedom is likely: first, when the authorities are indifferent; second, when the authorities are uncertain as to what they want; third, when there is a multiplicity of authorities; and fourth, when authority is vested in a multiplicity of groups, none of which has a clear majority.

Indifference is usually found when the issues at stake do not touch matters of control, of deep-seated interest, or of basic values. A member of a university faculty may say anything he likes about whether the universe is expanding or contracting, and encounter total social and political indifference. *Uncertainty* is usually the result of the rulers' inability to decide between different interests, or the ruling class's being made up of groups that disagree. A professor may say a number of things about investment, production, and trade, and encounter uncertainty. In the case either of *indifference* or *uncertainty* on the part of the authorities, the professor will probably not be bothered.

A *multiplicity of authorities* is found when, as in the case of the University of Paris, the jurisdiction of no one of them is perfectly clear in any dispute and they may be appealed to in turn, or avoided. The state university today is, to a very small extent, in this situation. It receives its budget from the state legislature, but it may also be a land-grant college with a Federal subsidy, and be allowed to accept private donations whose purposes are specified. Finally, the *multiplicity* of American universities, many with different educational philosophies and curricula, allows students a freedom they would not have if there were a single university system throughout the land. It is a similar multiplicity that has guaranteed religious freedom. Every church in the United States is in a minority and its desire to be tolerated virtually compels it to support the principle of tolerance itself.

If freedom is secure, it is only because of proper organization of the context in which it exists. "Freedom versus Organization" is an old theme—and a mistaken one. There is no freedom outside some social organization. Some kinds of organization curtail or destroy freedom, of course; others are irrelevant to it; still others preserve it. Per-

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haps the surest way of maintaining freedom is by an organization that distributes power so that the rulers are responsible in some fashion to the ruled. At its best, this gives sufficient power to the ruled to enable them to unseat their rulers and choose others equally amenable to the same process. Without such a distribution of power, one must rely on forces altogether outside the political organization to prevent despotism. Despots in any organization can be trusted at all only on two conditions: they may fear intrigue, rebellion, or assassination if they are too high-handed; or their organization may be part of a larger context which brings severe pressures to bear on them. The "benevolent despot" is usually in one or both of these situations.

THE democratic state does provide a context that restrains and guides despots who rule organizations within it. So the university in a democracy can rely considerably on the good will of its rulers—trustees or regents, presidents and deans—or on their fear for their jobs. Such good will is usually a living thing nurtured by the democratic community outside, responsible to the press and to public opinion. But it is still a chancy thing. In a private university the deans are responsible to the president, the president to the trustees and, in a limited way, the trustees to the alumni and the donors. In a state university, the president is responsible to the regents, the regents to the state legislature, and the legislature to the electorate. This is responsibility, to be sure, but not democratic responsibility, for it is not *accountability to the ruled*. The professors are of course members of the general electorate, but their vote is slight. So the university exhibits the minimal accountability that exists in a democratic society.

Professors have their own association, the American Association of University Professors, to protect them. But the Association has too little money, too much work, and none of the power of a trade union. It cannot call a strike. Although faculty salaries, and promotion and tenure regulations, are to some extent fixed by the faculty itself, problems of academic freedom have been created chiefly by the intervention of authorities from outside. Is this kind of interference to be deplored? Yes. The autonomy of universities in matters like academic freedom is of immense importance. Scholarship should not depend in any way on partisan politics or the vagaries of public opinion. However, in institutional matters concerning admission, conditions of work, salary scales, etc., etc., the outside public *should* be concerned. The quest for truth and the teaching of the young are vital concerns of society, and society, which is asked to pay for both enterprises, must have something to say about them.

Unfortunately, the lines of responsibility are snarled. Administrations should be accountable to faculties, and universities should be accountable to the people. Neither type of responsibility, though, should include direct supervision. Democratic responsibility demands that the expert's performance should be judged in the end by those for whom he acts, not that his every action, his procedures and methods, should be questioned and supervised. The expert requires authority and power to do his job. Whether he does well or badly is the people's business. But it is not their business to tell him *how* to do his work. Rule by committees—even committees of the whole—is not necessarily democratic.

THESE reflections arise from reading two books published by the American Academic Freedom Project of Columbia University on a grant from the Louis M. Rabinowitz Foundation, the book by Professor MacIver mentioned above, and *The Development of Academic Freedom in the United States* (Columbia University Press, 1955), by Richard Hofstadter and Walter P. Metzger (on which I drew earlier for my account of the history of academic freedom). The latter book, which starts with the medieval university and ends with the First World War, makes a shrewd, historically

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perceptive appraisal of the university as a social institution. Professor MacIver's book is an analysis and defense of academic freedom today which breathes the spirit of John Stuart Mill.

Professor MacIver documents a series of shocking situations involving arrogance, stupidity, and illiteracy on the part of people who interfere with the teacher's freedom to say what he believes. And he is eloquent in defense of that freedom. But he *narrows* his concern so that it excludes much that Hofstadter and Metzger include in their historical account of the subject, whereas the crucial need is to *widen* one's concern. I think the functions of the university are more varied than Professor MacIver makes them out to be. And I think his description of the dangers confronting academic freedom today is overdrawn and leads him to view the major problems of the university in inadequate perspective.

Both books express a belief that is probably a conclusion of the American Academic Freedom Project itself. In Professor MacIver's words, "Academic freedom is . . . a right claimed by the accredited educator, as teacher and as investigator, to interpret his findings and to communicate his conclusions without being subjected to any interference, molestation, or penalization because these conclusions are unacceptable to some constituted authority within or beyond the institution. *Here is the core of the doctrine of academic freedom. It is the freedom of the student within his field of study.*"

The university itself is defined in this book as fundamentally concerned with the acquisition and transmission of knowledge. It follows that such ends as adjustment to society, character-building, socialization, imparting of morals and values, are now secondary or derivative. Other institutions take the primary responsibility for them; the university has but one primary responsibility, and that is to truth. This view is fully intelligible in the area of natural science, but presupposes science as the ideal of scholarship.

Put simply, MacIver's argument is that academic freedom is a *necessary* condition for the pursuit of knowledge, for the attainment of truth. It is not a *sufficient* condition, of course. One may be free to search for the truth and still not be able to find it. But without freedom to look for it in one's own way and to state one's own conclusions, truth can scarcely be found. This is a powerful argument. And it is a true one, which is a great help to any argument. But consider the meaning of identifying the university with the acquisition and transmission of knowledge, and of defining academic freedom as a necessary condition of such work. Does an English department transmit knowledge *alone* to its students? Does a Fine Arts department? A Music department?

If they did, they would be limited to historical scholarship. As it is, they teach what some professor thinks Shakespeare meant—or Rembrandt, or Beethoven. Of necessity, they teach *values*, not just "knowledge." They teach what they believe the values of civilization to be, or the values of our civilization. To be sure, definition of the university in terms of knowledge alone still commits it to teaching some values, however implicitly, and MacIver recognizes this fully. There is the value of truth, which is at the heart of the enterprise, truth sought in certain ways, truth stated no matter how painful it is. Then there are the values of the methods of acquiring truth. These include objectivity and impartiality, honesty and candor, judging work solely on its merits, no matter what its source. The latter value implies the irrelevance of personal tastes and attitudes. In fact, the values one must embrace in order to acquire truth by the methods of science constitute an entire morality.

But is it the only morality that is properly taught—again, however implicitly? No matter how scientists disagree in their theories, they must agree on a set of methods if their disagreement is to be fruitful. And isn't there a still wider agreement necessary? Must there not be agreement that education includes more than knowledge, for taste

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and value and wisdom are more than knowledge, perhaps even transcend it, in that they are based on it and use it.

If a student takes a course in art history, why is he taught about Michelangelo, El Greco, and Rubens, instead of about the Rockwell Kents and Grant Woods of their time? Because, of course, the former are great painters and the latter are not. How do we know? Are there rules which can be applied unequivocally to show, *as a matter of knowledge*, that one painting is great and another is not? Surely we do not as yet have a science of aesthetics. So choice remains a question of taste. But, one may counter, the student need not be taught those things. He need only be taught "facts" about Michelangelo, El Greco, and Rubens. If that is so, he is taught unquestioningly and uncritically, except for matters of historical authenticity. But the teacher must analyze and defend whatever criteria he can bring to bear on the question of choice, for otherwise his choices seem totally subjective and irrational. Yet these standards of art are scarcely what a physicist would mean by "knowledge."

Professor MacIver says, of the teacher who talks about matters "irrelevant to the courses he is teaching" and colors the presentation of facts with his own values, that "he cannot claim the primary right of the scholar, academic freedom, when he abandons the approach of the scholar." This is unduly harsh. It may be easy enough to live up to such conditions if one is teaching natural science; it is much more difficult when one is teaching social science; and it is downright impossible in teaching the humanities. In fact, it is not even desirable to live up to them in teaching many things, especially works of art. If a teacher makes an interpretation of a poem, must he state all other interpretations of any currency? How can he keep his values out when he points to what he regards as a particularly beautiful phrase? No, these are not necessarily the conditions under which the professor is entitled to demand academic freedom, nor do these conditions exclude those who do not fulfill them.

WE HAVE arrived, it seems to me, at a larger conception of academic freedom than that usually held. We can value academic freedom not only because it is a necessary condition for the pursuit of truth, but also because it is a necessary condition for the enterprise of teaching, which involves much more than the transmission of knowledge. Academic freedom can be claimed by the incompetent as well as by the competent. The former simply should not have jobs for which they are incompetent; but so long as they have them they may claim the perquisites, the privileges, the necessities in this case, which go with the jobs.

So there is no question about whether a teacher should have academic freedom. He should, and that's all there is to it. The question is: *who* should teach? Not the incompetent, or the dishonest, or those who for reasons of personality or character would not make fit teachers. People are excluded from all kinds of professions even when they are intelligent and competent. Bar associations have character committees. Certain types of immoral behavior—not criminal, in the sense of being liable to prosecution by law—can cause the revocation of a license to practice medicine. So, too, with the teaching profession.

A man may lose his post as a teacher, and lose it properly, even if his behavior in the classroom and the laboratory is impeccable. Suppose he were to persuade students, informally, to be criminals. Suppose he were to lead youths into homosexuality or girls into prostitution. He would not be a fit teacher. But these, one may object, are criminal actions. Not necessarily. Not if there is neither outright advocacy nor immoral behavior. Not if the student is perverted subtly by "ideas." At the very least, the teacher's conduct is then unsuitable to his profession.

In the current dispute over academic freedom this point has been constantly neglected or minimized by those who do not think that membership in the Communist party is *prima facie* evidence of unfitness to teach.

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A teacher's personality and character qualifications are not to be judged solely by his scholarship and teaching, but also by his effect on students. And not only on his own students, but on the student body of the institution. This is what makes it so oversimple to say that a man who is a member of the Communist party, or who is a Nazi, or a member of the Ku Klux Klan, must not be deprived of his academic post merely for that reason, but only if it can be shown that he actually distorts materials in the classroom, or is an overt propagandist when he should be teaching. First, the teacher must inevitably (and should) teach values connected with his subject matter. Second, almost every professor has all kinds of direct and indirect contact with the student body. Suppose he uses his position to convert them to Nazism or Communism? Is this to be considered so much part of his personal life as not to be at issue in assessing his fitness for the post? Would he have been able to have the same effect outside the teacher-student relationship? Probably not. Anyone with real experience of teaching knows that the influence of a popular teacher over a student is very great, almost like that of a psychoanalyst over a patient.

Professor MacIver agrees that perhaps Communists, at least card-carrying party members, should not teach. But, he insists, there are so few Communists teaching that the interference with the academic process incident to an investigation is worse than the harm such teachers might do if left unbothered. In addition, he points out, Communist party membership is secret and difficult to prove. Hence it is wise to forget any rules against Communists as teachers and dismiss them only for overt infractions of rules or for conduct unbefitting a professor. So the issue becomes one of behavior, not of belief.

I am impressed by the first part of this argument, because it is most important that there should be no investigation of faculty conduct by self-appointed vigilantes or "public-spirited" citizens. The faculty has little enough autonomy as it is. And we do not want the yellow press to make Roman holidays at the expense of education. But the faculty should have the right to make their own investigations. If anyone can be trusted to be informed and judicious, they can.

As for the second part, the conditions for dismissal that MacIver suggests are even less investigatable than party membership. How, after all, shall we discover whether or not a teacher uses his position to do any of the things for which he should be dismissed? Shall all his relations with students be supervised? The suggestion is preposterous; even to discover whether a teacher uses the classroom as a forum for personal beliefs that are irrelevant to his subject we would have to spy on him. Official visitation of his classroom, which is a nuisance if it is not very infrequent, is useless for this purpose. When there are official visitors, the teacher is not likely to say things for which he can be censured. Perhaps one might simply get student reports of what is said in the classroom. But aside from the fact that such reports are notoriously untrustworthy—one has only to look at most students' notes—this would permit any student with a real or imaginary grievance to denounce his teacher to the administration. And the mere possibility of his doing so would destroy that delicate relation between teacher and student which is a condition of learning.

There is another matter. One of the reasons that academic freedom is a necessity to the teaching profession is that one-sidedness and propaganda are overcome not by ruling out all personal judgment, or by an austere commitment to say only what is proven, but by the very multiplicity and disparity of our beliefs. Discussion is a method of arriving at conclusions reflectively only if the parties to the discussion are allowed to hold different views. If they must all hold the same view, then their belief was arrived at prior to the discussion and there is no discussion at all, only dogmatic assertion. After all, it is the diversity in attitude of different teachers that makes the educational process what it is.

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The man who believes, as Communists do, that only those should teach who agree with him is a man who is opposed to the educational process as we know it. Further, he is opposed to the pursuit of truth. For that involves the use of methods which by no means lead to total agreement at any one time—as the history of science witnesses. To refuse one's opponents the right to state their opposition is to judge problems in advance of scientific inquiry. But this is a denial of the very case for academic freedom as MacIver states it. And if a man denies the argument in support of academic freedom, refusing the principle on which it rests, how can he claim such freedom for himself?

Not only is academic freedom as we understand it necessary in order that knowledge may be acquired and teaching go on, but it is necessary that it be believed in by the people for whom we claim this right. And what is at stake is the values they hold. If they do not believe in academic freedom, as Communists do not, they are enemies within the gates and will destroy us when they can. They should no more be regarded as teachers than men who derive all their beliefs from crystal balls should be regarded as scientists.

I HAVE argued that not only is academic freedom necessary for the pursuit of truth in our universities, it is also necessary for the process of education, which is very much more than teaching truth. Of course, academic freedom is not *absolutely* necessary for the pursuit of truth: truth could still be pursued outside the academy, and even, with some secrecy, inside it. Academic freedom, however, is necessary to *maximize* the pursuit of truth, because it allows many more people who are qualified to do so to seek knowledge and to state what they find.

But is academic freedom the only necessary condition for maximizing the discovery of knowledge and the teaching of it? Surely not. There is, for example, the matter of inducing people of talent to teach in colleges and universities. Conditions of work are important as motivation, and they include time and support for research, leaves of absence, sabbaticals, decent office space, secretarial help, and assistants. Salaries are perhaps even more important, and the salaries of professors are a public scandal.

Another condition, a primary one, is that the group from which professors are drawn should be as large as possible. This involves, of course, some factors outside the control of the college. The percentage entering colleges of the brightest and most talented high school students is appallingly low. But it is partly within the control of the college to deal with students once they have enrolled. And only about half of the brightest students in the freshman class ever graduate.

Admissions policies and the hiring of faculty are completely the colleges' own doing. No one else can be blamed for their failure in these respects. Talented Negroes, Jews, and Catholics are denied entrance to colleges and refused teaching jobs in favor of less talented white Protestants. Prejudice extends even to Protestants of foreign birth, if they don't come from England.

At the present time, which of the three conditions we have mentioned—academic freedom, motivation, and drawing faculty members from the largest possible group—are most often violated? Which have the greatest effect on academic life, on the influence of the university on the rest of society, and on the pursuit of truth? Obviously, the latter two. Yet academic freedom, which is the least important in this context, is the most discussed, and it is the one condition whose violation swiftly and surely brings down professorial wrath.

John P. Roche argued convincingly some time ago in a series of articles is the *New Republic* that there is actually more freedom in the United States today than ever, and more academic freedom as well. Apart from the history of the American college and university, he cites the public record of repression and worse, vigilantes, lynchings, and the raw justice of the frontier. There is the disgraceful history of the Know Nothings, for example, and of the rewards

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offered by leading Southern citizens for the kidnapping and delivery of important abolitionists. Even the presumed freedom of opinion that comes from extreme diversity of views did not quite exist in America. For each local community—the Quakers in Rhode Island, the Amish in Pennsylvania, etc., etc.—might be heterodox from the standpoint of its neighbors, but was orthodox at home. So diversity of belief in America often resulted in replacing the tyranny of the nation with the tyranny of the community. And local authority may breathe more hotly down one's neck than any other.

WHY, then, the emphasis today on academic freedom, when it is so immeasurably widened and secured, and the neglect of more serious academic issues? Part of it may come from that lack of concern for education common, far too common, among professors. Many of them simply know no other way of getting their research supported than by teaching in a university. And usually there is no other way. So students are thought of as an unavoidable evil, and teaching as an unhappy necessity. And since salary, prestige, and academic power go with publication of research, the professor wants to be left alone to do research, but at the same time wants to be helped by grants, subsidies, time off. Insofar as he does concern himself with the educational process, he is likely to think that its basic problems will be solved only if the subject he teaches is required for all students.

It is time that sociologists, political scientists, and economists dealt seriously and at length with the college and its relations to the graduate school, with the role of the professor and the motivation of the student, with channels of academic advancement, relations of faculty and administration, and the complex connections of university, community, and nation. And it is time that the problems of university government and accountability were thoroughly aired. But we cannot know exactly what is wrong, or what should be done, without careful self-examination.

Professor MacIver cannot be accused, as so many others can, of insufficient concern for education. But his overestimation of the threat to academic freedom today is an unwitting diversion of attention from the more urgent academic problems of our time. And though what he says about tyranny and intolerance of unpopular views is carefully documented and persuasive, he neglects to consider the climate of opinion within the university itself. For he deals almost entirely with pressures from outside the faculty. Yet within faculties there exist considerable pressures to conformity of political opinion.

How many professors have been deprived of promotions because they spoke in favor of Senator McCarthy? I know of one such personally, and sat unhappily on the committee which denied a recommendation for his promotion. The rejection of the recommendation was based to some extent on the argument that a man foolish enough to support McCarthy must be foolish, too, in his own professional sphere. How many professors have been resented, their services decried, their intellectual judgment questioned, because they believed that Communists were not fit to teach? A university faculty is a body of men, not angels, and the winds of doctrine blow over them freely. Unless the pressures faculty members generate and the vested departmental interests they serve are recognized for what they are, nothing can be done to make their temper more judicious, their judgment of their fellows more accurately based on merit. We professors must be staunch in resisting academic oppression from the outside, to be sure, but until we stop inflating its danger we shall not be able to concentrate on cleaning our own house.

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POET OUT OF ISRAEL

The Odyssey of Pinhas Sadeh

HERBERT HOWARTH

BY BIRTH certificate Pinhas Sadeh is twenty-seven. He was scarcely twenty when readers of COMMENTARY saw the first poem of his to be translated into English, his "Proverbs of the Virgins" (August 1950). He combines in one person the childish innocence of the archetypal poet and the crabbed anger of the archetypal prophet.

The Middle East is the land of prophets. T. E. Lawrence has noted how, generation after generation, a prophet emerges from the desert landscape and calls backsliding humanity to the intolerable asceticism and purity that that landscape postulates. The Biblical story of Israel is a pageant of exultant scourgers of the people. In the Mandatory period of the return of Israel to the desert context, there was no room yet for the return of the prophets: poetry was welcome, but that important component of it, the act of self-criticism, was not; battle-cries and actual battle were the common destiny. But in a state which has passed beyond the period when it can blame an outside authority for its problems, which is responsible for itself, and which is establishing its structure and its character, the prophet may find his function again. Pinhas Sadeh has in the course of nearly ten years of composing and appearing in print developed from a writer of dramatic lyric, meditation, and parable to a preacher whose voice is "The voice of one man complaining to the One God."

These traditional words are Pinhas Sadeh's own, pronounced at the crisis of a thousand-line poem which he wrote about a year ago and which this article will be mainly devoted to describing, on the grounds that it has, for all its problematical aspects, a special significance for Israel and for everyone in the world who loves poetry.

LET us glance at the brief biographical facts. Pinhas Sadeh was born in Lvov in 1930, and taken to Israel by his parents when he was three. First he lived with them in one of the famous citrus villages of the Sharon, Magdiel. He was—I gathered from him as he told his story to me—a child who fitted with difficulty in the life of a family: already that asocial, separatist tendency that marks poet and prophet was disturbing him, and there were elements in his situation—in his interior, not his "real," situation—which now in later years strew his writing with claims that he is motherless and homeless and that, like Jeremiah, he has been set apart from the regular world since a prenatal moment when

God came in your mother's belly to find you and murmured you to him.

His parents sent him to a school at Tel Litvinsky. From there he went at the age of fifteen to Kibbutz Sarid in Jezreel, where he was a shepherd. (He may have had other tasks too, but what he recollects, and it is significant, is that he was a shepherd.) Two years later he went to Jerusalem to write poetry. Called up for the Israeli army, he

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PINHAS SADEH is a young Israeli poet who is virtually unknown to American readers—a circumstance HERBERT HOWARTH tries to remedy in this account of his personality and work. Mr. Howarth, himself a poet who makes his home in London, has translated Sadeh and other Israeli writers into English, having learned Hebrew while serving with the British administration in Palestine (from which he resigned in 1945 in protest against his government's policy). The most recent of his many contributions to COMMENTARY was a review of *Unambo* by Max Brod, in the May 1952 issue.

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served for two years, then returned to further writing. He has no financial resources: a life of writing in fact has meant, and means, for him that he works for a spell, perhaps a month, as night watchman or post office messenger or bookkeeper's assistant or whatever comes to hand, then when he has put by sufficient money lives without work for a month and drinks in events at the rhythm of a loiterer: and that is the time of writing.

From the outset his poems caught the attention of literary editors. The Hebrew press of Israel is small; various criticisms have been made of it at various times; but one thing is clear, that it leads almost every other country in the world in the proportion of the space it regularly gives to the discussion of the arts and the publication of new work of the highest standard. In particular *Ha-aretz* is a patron of poetry in the old sense of the term, and its literary editors are discerning. They welcomed and printed Sadeh's earliest poems. Another paper, *Ha-Z'man*, later opened its columns to him. Eventually he had enough poems for *The Saying of Silence*, which was accepted for publication when he was still under twenty. Desiring one more substantial poem to use as an opening statement for this book, he composed "Proverbs of the Virgins." He had just been called up for the army, it seemed uncertain whether he would survive the experience of war, and he sat in his garret in the poorest quarter of Jerusalem watching from the window birds wheeling in the sunset sky; he saw his poem enacted in their black wheeling movements, and it formed itself effortlessly in his mind, a "given" poem:

Everything is affliction, everything is song.
And know this:
Of all wines brewed tears are the strongest brew.
If you sit over the wine at midnight and your body is
A hall for carousal or prayer, and your eyes the world's luminaries,
Not the wine has dizzied you, but the tears in your blood.

culminating in a superb, twice presented parable of the virgins bidden to the bridal night.

With this poem the book was perfected and published, making "a slim volume," as the reviewers used to say, but a volume speaking to the new Israel with a new voice. (All the poems in it have since been translated into English by a poet in Haifa, Mr. Hart.) Pinhas Sadeh's own music and his distinctive subject matter are already clear in it. In the history of the prosody of modern Hebrew it has a special innovating value. The kind of *vers libre* in which the lines, the rhythm, the architectonics depend on no preconceived pattern, but come from the poet's immediate reaction to his problem, has been familiar in France for fifty years and in England nearly that long, but to Israel it is new. There are countries to which artistic movements come late. The artists of Portugal, it has been said, move a hundred years behind other countries in Western Europe; the time lag has not impaired the value of their work, nor its significance for its own particular audience when it has come. Similarly, Israel's artistic advances follow, not a hundred years, but a generation or two behind those of other countries from which they have been garnered. Pinhas Sadeh's prosody is a case in point.

It may have been this innovating character in his poetry that first attracted the notice of his editors. It may be this character—or it may instead be the mood of melancholy and nostalgia and separation—that led critics to review his book less enthusiastically than he had expected. Pinhas Sadeh had assumed from the outset that to speak a simple language, to write a non-formal verse, to be as natural and innocent as a Messiah whose coming is to the poor, would insure a ready reception for his writing. So it did; for we have already seen that he was printed in newspapers and in book form much earlier than many a poet can hope to be. But when he read the reviews of his book, he was stricken with pain to find that they dealt with him according to that have-it-both-ways formula which is the hallmark of the reviewers' guild: review-

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ers want to have it both ways and poets want them to have it only one way. Pinhas Sadeh typically ignored the positive things they wrote about him and decided that he was without honor in his own country.

WHEN a poet reaches this position, he often falls silent for a while, then, having unconsciously reorganized his forces, begins again in a modified style, sometimes modified for the better, sometimes otherwise. Pinhas Sadeh, instead, went on writing in the same kind as before but, because he felt his listeners had rejected his message, he began to harangue them more overtly, became more definitely the prophet. If I am right in this reconstruction—and I am basing it principally, though not merely, on a conversation he and I had with Victor Gollancz over a year ago—he asked himself why his readers did not hear him with complete assent, and in answer, he decided that the cause lay in "materialism" and an overemphasis on the operations of the intellect instead of "the spirit." He had often been puzzled and hurt by the behavior of people in the street, in cafés, in the home, a behavior in which he found it so hard to join. The flaw in that behavior he construed as a want of "spirituality," which I will venture to translate for him into "purity as demonstrated in simplicity," although I know he adds ringing overtones of the other possible meanings of the word. On that same want of spirituality he now blamed the reception of his poems, for him insufficiently clamorous. So he began to seek and to preach spirituality, and eventually he chose for the symbol of a spirituality realized on earth the image of a rebuilt Jerusalem.* Having conceived that symbol, he began to ask himself whether there might be any place in the world where the New Jerusalem, or something that approximated more closely to it than his own Jerusalem, existed. Concurrently, he grew possessed of the desire to take his message to a much wider public. If his mission had not been received by his own people, perhaps it should be carried abroad into the theater of the world.

His sleep became troubled, he tells us in the "New Jerusalem," by *siyutim*, nightmares, and a nausea filled him. These symptoms he increasingly understood as an imperious summons to leave Israel and see whether another country would welcome him. He was meditating his hegira, and in the summer of 1954 he took that step which Toynbee has noted as a necessity in the career of a prophet. Having no passage money, he signed up as waiter on a ship bound from Israel to Italy, a method in keeping with his regular way of working to make poetry possible.

"And so," he writes, addressing himself in his characteristic mode of inner dialogue:

And so you have left stately Jerusalem
That you might discover a new Jerusalem.
You have gone out of Egypt to wander the desert world
And to lay a cloth for the Passover of the soul.

The lines are from the first episode of the poem he began to write as he journeyed, describing his experience stage by stage. His absence from Israel was to last six months. The first draft of this private Odyssey was complete after three. During the remainder of his travels he continued to work at it, chiseling, deleting, occasionally elaborating, a process which was not complete when he and I parted on a winter midnight in the

*Blake had chosen the same image, with its sources in medieval literature, for a similar end one hundred fifty years earlier, but I do not think Pinhas Sadeh had more than an inkling of the way Blake used the image and none at all of his sources, for, though he understands other men's poetry as only a highly original poet can, he reads infinitely little, and his literary borrowings are based on the spark of a single random contact, not on a wide or analytical knowledge. Thus in his "New Jerusalem" poem, he has a remarkable and significant refrain describing the pilgrimage of Paracelsus; it has the qualities of certain contemporary erudite poems, but it is actually derived from a paragraph in a newspaper which Pinhas saw by chance. I hope it is clear that this does not one jot diminish its value as poetry. The poet can work from such slight charges to his intuition and work supremely.

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London subway, so that it could possibly be that passages quoted here may no longer remain, or not stand in their present form, in his final version. But the manuscript copy which he gave to me consists of twenty-one parts, varying from a seventeen-line lyric to a two-hundred-line sermon. It is the diary of his spiritual quest for the "New Jerusalem"; and throughout these notes I am using that simple, traditional title for it.

THE opening poem in the sequence has to my ear and taste a breathtaking freshness. Naming the inner conditions, or some of them, that prompt his journey, he expresses the sense that dates from his earliest awareness of his dedication to the poet's pursuit of the divine. What is "the divine"?—the meaning is indicated with a flash of the paganism, so often noted, that lent air and light to the poetry of Tschernichovsky, for it was impossible even for a monotheistic Jewish writer to come back to the Mediterranean without an elating sense of clear oxygenous skies filled with the oldest gods busy at primitive tasks:

The poet, while a boy, to the gods in their
fastness, far, far is already called.
They call him who has no country, no village, no home; they say come, build
among us,
Come and possess the daughter of heaven.

Aspirations of ordinary men are

a modest house and a tawny girl,
A fire in the dusk, a pipe, the hissing kettle
in the corner,
A meadow under a window, the kine coming
home.

He contrasts his own different and differentiating dream, which is

to be without house among the housed,
To encompass the earth in trains or by ship
or on foot,
To sleep by day, to progress by night, to
meditate and make song-syntax.

God, he says, has taken his pleasure away in order that he may be free and able to enter into the pleasures and afflictions of other men and women. I well remember that the first time he came to my flat at Chiswick he told me, as an apology for the typical brooding that kept him in silence the greater part of the evening, "I am sorry. I cannot entertain you, I cannot make jokes like other people." He has chosen the Nessus shirt of poetry and understanding, and consequently must be the observer of life and not the participant. But was there a choice? Seduction by God into his service—"with sweet sore hints," as he tells—is irresistible. In that same way Ghazzali found, and all the mystics, that "there is no choice left."

The next two sections of the poem describe the actual passage between Jaffa and London. First, the voyage through the Mediterranean, which brings the discovery many poets make when they watch or travel on water, that they are "half man, half fish": *i.e.*, nearer to the play of the elements than their fellows. Again he has the sense of his difference from the rest:

Four days the boat ran on the two-thousand-
foot abyss.
You alone of the travelers reflected
How like man's way through life it was,
How life encases dreams as the deep encases
The beasts and the plural incredible fish.

At Naples he has an hour or two ashore and laments the aftermath of the age of Dante and Giotto—"turned to rot and desolation." He lands in France and crosses it without break except in Paris where, for want of money for a hotel, he sleeps the night in a public garden; and at once takes ship over the Channel. And there, when the fog wraps the boat, he feels that he is really in that belt of earth that he sums up in the word "England" or, more especially, "London." One might ask why he chose London for the first scene of his search for the New Jerusalem. To a Londoner it is irony, even farce. I suppose that he thought of London as a center of poetry by reason of its past in Shakespeare and Blake, its present in Eliot (to whom he submitted his poetry),

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but on the side of the sensations it is evident that he was drawn by the sense of fog and clinging damp, his feelings operating in reverse as compared with those of the northwesterners, Goethe, Shelley, Byron, the Brownings, who hastened to clear sunshine for their stimulus. Was spirituality nourished by the blurring, shifting, cold mists? And would he find hidden there what he could not find in his own country?

The seventeen poems that form the middle of the epic describe his actual discoveries in London. Everything that Pinhas Sadeh saw in his first weeks there, the sights and sounds that are so familiar to a Britisher that they go unnoticed and certainly do not of themselves alone provoke poetry,* were sifted immediately through his senses into the images of the poem. He has told me, with wonder at himself, how during the early part of his stay, he could not open a door and step onto a pavement without uttering new lines for the "New Jerusalem": a jet of emotion condensed instantaneously into verse.

Two contrasting elements stand out in his first reaction to England. Remember that he believes, not exactly as conscious dogma, but as a matter of unconsidered natural egotistic faith, that the supreme practice is poetry, and that a civilization can best be measured by the poetry it produces. So for him one compelling thought about England is that indicated above: it is the land of Shakespeare. "The coal valleys," he bursts out exultantly on the train nearing London's Victoria Station, "still hold the luster and glow of art." The great plays flash through his head, and he finds that still

The night storm cups the incantations of
Lady Macbeth
And King John sits, webbed by thought, on
his ebony chair,
While the curd-beautiful Ophelia
Floats between flowers on
The faces of mill rivers.

England has been industrialized, but under the black grime he can discern, bounding like a healthy pulse, the comedy and violence of Shakespeare.

THAT is the first thought. That is his hope. The emphasis is on the word "still," for an acceptable civilization must not only produce poetry, it must "still" live up to the poetry after the singer is dead. Now when Pinhas Sadeh comes to test this, he does it by looking at people. Their movements, what they say, the expressions in their eyes, will tell him whether or not the poetry lives on—whether Jerusalem is realized in their conduct. His first view of the people of London is in Victoria Station. I have never forgotten how another child of the Middle East, Charles Issawi, an Egyptian economist whose studies are gaining currency among serious readers, remarked on his own experiences of a London station: "I watched the crowds pouring from the escalator and thought how a Crusader never in the whole of his life saw so many people together at one time." Bearing in mind Saladin's ring of steel round the doomed hill of Hattin and his massed charges against the Crusader lines at Arsuf, I have come to doubt the statistical accuracy of that remark. But that it has an emotional validity, especially inasmuch as the people on a metropolitan escalator represent not the masses of a peasant Asia but the supposedly individuated citizens of the West, I have no doubt at all; and Pinhas Sadeh's astonishment endorses it, if we allow for the fact that he is a poet who judges by his glands, not by the standards of books.

But Pinhas Sadeh adds a different judgment, germane to his whole English experiment and his total view of life: so many human intentions and actions intersect at this station, he cries, and so much confidence in God is expressed in them, and yet, "All these people are sad. They are unaccountably sad."

*The famous London poems are written by non-Londoners. The "Queen of Cities All" is by a Scot, Dunbar. Johnson wrote his "London" while he was still a relatively unacclimatized Midland bumpkin and neophyte. "The Waste Land" is by a poet who was, when he wrote it, still an American. And now Pinhas Sadeh has created an Israeli London poem.

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They are all sad. At every parting
The heart enacts all partings of old
And breaks again for everyone else it loved.
How much more can this heart endure?
Will the longings never let go?
The woman's voice whispers unclearly, a poor light
Falls from the high lamps on tired faces. It is cold. You
Sip a cup of tea from the station trolley.

He has at the very first contact observed signs that contradict his high hopes. He reports them faithfully, but does not yet see that they mean that the New Jerusalem is not builded here.

A number of poems now follow describing his further explorations of what Blake, his giant predecessor, called "the mighty ruin" of London. He walks along the Thames embankment, goes into the cafés, tries to read the faces of waitresses, is attracted by lounging women, goes to a church, where he preaches silently to himself a sermon of universal love, walks through Highgate Woods. In a little time he admits the implications of those earlier signs of sadness. London is not the world he sought. It has its beggars, its poverty, its contrasting fat jowls of excess wealth, and, these extreme cases apart, it is—and again it may be put in Blake's words—"mournful, ever-weeping." In fact, it is simply true to life, and we can all say from our common sense that he could have known from the beginning that he would find it so. But part of a poet's value to mankind lies in his innocence, by reason of which he begins at the beginning in all circumstances and sees customary things absolutely new. For Pinhas Sadeh in particular, it was essential that he should not miss his London experience by over-clever prevision, and that he should not read the signs in Victoria Station too early. In the act of walking London and passing it under his burning scrutiny, he undergoes a change in his own self.

This is the turning point of his Odyssey, and the gain that he draws. One is tempted to call it the building of his "Inner Jerusalem," but that would be an exaggeration and misleading. Simply, it is an important step in the evolution of his prophetic role. We can see it operating in a poem written after a night of heavy rain. He rises in the morning and goes out onto the rinsed pavements. A resolution has formed in him: henceforward he will accept his loneliness, his separateness, and wield it to prosecute his mission. He will inveigh, as the prophet must, against the wrongs of the world and summon men to the ordering of their cities, their estates, and their orchards. More than ever he recognizes that the prophet is also the martyr. He accepts that. And he will "paint the wilderness with the blood of my poems."

The penultimate poem of the sequence is a further brief meditation in the concentrated form of a rhyming lyric on the life of the prophet-martyr. It evokes an image that has been of great power in the history of Israel, and has renewed its power contemporaneously: the image of Elijah, solitary in wild Jordan and nourished by the ravens. For Pinhas Sadeh, too, there is this isolation compensated by a secret sustenance:

Such are you. You stayed
All day on the hill
With the songs that you made.
You sang and were lonely

But the ravens came
With a goblet of honey
And gave it to you.

Heart, take it with all
Its sugar and dew. . . .

It is the moment of consolation, the moment of exquisite sweetness which is the martyr's reward. Then in the last poem he asks where he will go next to continue his search for perfection on earth. Possibly to the swamps of tropical Africa, or to Spain where

Women, red-pranked, sing in the country taverns
On cedar tables to the beat of castanets.

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or to "the bright decks of the snowfields" in the Arctic North.

Shortly before Pinhas Sadeh left London, uncertain which second destination he would now attack, a reading of some of these poems was arranged at the home of Mrs. Priescal in Brondesbury, a private audience that included a number of Hebrew scholars and writers gathering there. In the discussion that followed the reading he was urged to resume the search for Jerusalem where he left it off, in the original Jerusalem. Politically, that was the advice that inevitably had to be given by the Zionists among his listeners. But psychologically, too, it was the obvious and correct ultimate solution (though not necessarily an immediate solution—for it is no use the prophet going back to his Mecca till he can defeat the Quraish). Any D. H. Lawrence figure, restlessly searching the globe till the very end, will more often than not be unsatisfactory. Literature, shaping matters a little more perfectly than life, prefers Peer Gynt to D. H. Lawrence, and sends that wanderer and patcher of perfection back to Solveig at the point of departure: "Where was I all the time?" "In my faith, in my hope, and in my love." In the story of modern man, collective and individual, Solveig is a highly relevant image of peace.

In Pinhas Sadeh's poetry there is an image of peace. It has been present in all his writing. It is not clearly cognate with his prophetic function. But because it is so intimately involved in the special beauty of his poetry it must be described here. In Israel he was a shepherd. Sometimes he can recapture the simplicity, the central calm, of the shepherd's existence. One night in London, when he was living in the top story of an old doss-house, a violent gale howled through the cracks and rotten fabric of the attic where he lay in bed. He took out his Hebrew Bible and read the best known of all Psalms: "The Lord is my shepherd." The reading—I can imagine how it went in his low, childlike, wondering voice—brought back to his mind memories of his work in Israel, of days when he himself was actually out tending his flocks. In the London storm he felt a complete native peace in himself. Sometimes that peace is in his poetry, and the simplicity that is allied to it is very often the keynote of his writing. It is also true by contrast that, attracted by a dated concept of "bohemia," he went later in London to seek an illusory, feverish simplicity on the margin of the city's existence, as if unaware that the real people whom he wanted to know and reach were the torpid millions sleeping decently in their beds, not the riff-raff in the all-night bars, billiard halls, and dance palaces. That is an unoriginal streak in his composition, this old-time craving of the artist for the lowest life. It arises from a longing for vitality and simplicity, but it is a non-creative inversion of both. To that error Pinhas Sadeh is prone, but fortunately it very little affects his poetry. On the contrary, in his poetry moments of pure creative simplicity are often found and held.

It is a fascinating aspect of the immediate evolution of Jewish attitudes that, together with the peace that is associated with the actual and metaphorical peace of an actual and metaphorical shepherd, Sadeh's writing also takes the quality of peace from another source. Let us consider the reverberations of this passage describing the lights in Victoria Station:

The lamps pour light, light that bewilders,
Light that the child sees, waking at midnight, beyond in the kitchen; sees his mother
Still making the feast for tomorrow. . . .

Coming from a poet who has allowed himself so little of home and parents, who in fact denies himself the harmony of the hearth as part of his sacrifice, this is a particularly moving image. In any poetry in the world it would be right as an image of the rhythm of home and family; in a Jewish poem it is particularly meaningful, and it draws its warmth from the igloo warmth of the Jewish family through two thousand years of exile—the home, and the mother at the center of the home, providing nourish-

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ing security while the winter world howled outside. Here is a lonely, solitary, tramping, quasi-celibate poet, who has moments of calm sweetness which marry the busy, warm Yiddish peace of the *golah* home to the clear-skied slow-pacing peace of an Israeli valley.

I like to think that in his celebration of this marriage—not by talking about it, for he is unconscious of it, but by actually celebrating it for every sensitive reader in the sound and shape of his poetry—he is important and representative. His marriage is there as a sensuous, lived fact; how far conclusions can be drawn from its presence is not equally certain. In the very act of translating this particular triumph of his in the above terms, I have oversimplified it so that it partly escapes and dies. That happens when poetry is translated, as it must often be for the sake of discussion yet without impairment can never be.

There is a peace in poetry that has the excitement of a sword and attack. That militant hyperactive peace can be found in Wordsworth and, above all, in Blake, who made a point of it in his preaching. It is in Pinhas Sadeh, too. It is integral to his parables, which in turn are integral to his approach to life and to his success as a poet, the parables of "Proverbs of the Virgins"; or in the "New Jerusalem" such pregnant lines as

A man is moved like a scepter through the world: equally single, equally
Shining until he is laid aside and lies in the box.

A hostile critic might say that these high moments are not sufficiently frequent to justify my use of them in praise of Pinhas Sadeh. He might argue that a sustained power of incantation based on the felicitous and skilled matching of words and rhythm is essential to the success of a poem, and that Pinhas Sadeh is so often banal and flat between far separated moments of excitement that he does not yet qualify for everything I have attributed to him. There is no consistent virtuoso passage-work, it is true; simplicity does lapse into banality too often; and the style tends to the horizonless sprawling of Blake's *Prophetic Books* instead of the irresistible compactness of his lyrics. But how should we take the part of such severe perfectionists as this imaginary opponent or Pinhas Sadeh himself? He has his moments of profound insight, his images of brilliance and sweetness, his individual music, his power to bring disparate worlds into one. If he died today, his achievement could be hailed as memorable. If he continues to live, write, and develop, he may do much more.

THIS still leaves it indeterminate whether he is representative for the new generation in Israel, the younger men and women who grew up just in time to participate in creating the state their fathers had planned and sought but had not in their innermost hearts expected to see in existence so soon. To judge by his own statements, in his poetry and in life, he is far from representative; he is the man apart, who is utterly unlike. It is hard to say, however, whether a prophet is alone in his attitudes, or alone simply by virtue of his consciousness of them and courage in announcing them at an epoch when others in whom they are also latent are still unconscious or half-conscious of them. Conceivably, the young of Israel are ready for their new life to be reintegrated with *galut* qualities of temperament that the pioneer generation sharply cut away. Conceivably, the notion of a new spirituality, though it sounds rawly evangelical in the West, as if it stood for the Big Tent and healing by hands, has an original and serious meaning in the Israeli context. Max Brod in *Unambo* has devotedly drawn the young people of Israel and has hailed them as spiritual because candid in behavior and enthusiastic for art; but perhaps all that sincere embrace of music and truth which he describes in them entails the sense of a lack, too—and he, for all his wisdom, was too much an intellectual European of the past to see it, while the immature non-wise Pinhas Sadeh can say it for them because he is like them in age but apart from them by his incapacity for comradeship.

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In one aspect it is to be hoped that he *is* significant of a new direction among the young: in his willingness to reject collective opinion. The "New Jerusalem" is not a cry of triumph, not nationalistic. Those whose criteria are solely nationalistic can and will easily be offended by it. It is personal, rebellious, going-apart, doubting. Precisely in that character it is a worthy expression and justification of the independence of Israel. Nations come of age not only so that they shall have their anthems, their cabinets, their monuments, and their pride, though these are necessary and the last named a very good thing, but to have freedom, including the freedom to nourish those inner doubts on which improvement depends.

Pinhas Sadeh's poems and their message will, I hope, be heard everywhere in due course. What he has to say will always ring true for the general world. He wished, when he journeyed to England, to bypass his own people and to talk at once to the multitudes whom only Hollywood and television can in fact reach. But, as we have seen, though it was well that he made the effort, it could not succeed. His first duty lay at home; that message was first to Israel and to the Jewish people; and he acknowledged this by returning to Israel early in 1955. His latest letter to me came from a valley where he was again watching sheep.

WHAT brought him together with me in England, enabling me to know his new poem and, with my wife's help, to translate some of it? He had read my translation of "Proverbs of the Virgins" in COMMENTARY six years ago, and that led him to me in order that he might have an English version of his new poem to put before that wider audience of which he was dreaming. And since I was then directing an influential public institution in England, he may have felt that that brought him in nearer reach of the public. In the outcome, I alone was the Gentile world to which he spoke. But, sharing some of his separatism, I could perhaps provide in translating him an echo, however faint, of the cry of his poem. And some symbolic quality must have seeped into my role as translator, for he said to me at the last meeting: "I failed in my journey here. But I hope that you have not lost interest in me. If I lose your concern, I lose everything." In reporting and interpreting him I may, by too sharp an attachment to truth as registered in literary criticism, have said things that will trouble him when he reads them, and if he counts those to the neglect of all else here he will mourn the failure of his trust. Yet that will not be right. Although I cannot write a poet's story without a care, and an over-care, for weighing all the factors that play in him, I write of Pinhas Sadeh under the impulsion of a belief in his poetry and in his uncompromising self-dedication to it.

I believe that the gods love Pinhas Sadeh. When we say this of a man, we are consoling him and ourselves for all that life falls short in the living. But Pinhas Sadeh does not ask consolation, other than that honey which the ravens bring. He has accepted his martyrdom: not to live in society, but to take on himself all society's burdens; not to breathe, but to lend the breath to his poems. If there were some order of life possible in which the martyrdom of the prophets and the poets were unnecessary, it would be welcome. Blake demanded it for the New Jerusalem: a life in which the virtues of pity, mercy, charity would be unknown, since there would be none of the sorrows on which they are parasites. But since the New Jerusalem is a dream, we must make our judgments within the limitations of this world—"the place where in the end we find our happiness, or not at all"—and within these limitations we might many of us honor, and some wish to choose, the sadness and the song of Pinhas Sadeh before comfort or the graces or even participation in experience.

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A CURIOUS THEFT

A Story

MEYER LIBEN

THE junior counsellor ran up to the division head.

"We found the Torah in Mickey Rosen's trunk," he said breathlessly.

From this statement one might surmise that he had been *looking* for the Torah in Mickey Rosen's trunk, which was, of course, not the case. In fact, the junior counsellor had been deeply surprised.

The division head, busy with the cares of last-day packing (for the camp was breaking up that afternoon), creased his forehead in absent-minded puzzlement.

"Why?" he asked.

And then, as the full import of this information was borne in on him, he asked:

"Why, why in God's name would he want to take the Torah home with him?"

The junior counsellor shrugged.

"I don't know," he said. "There it was, at the bottom of the trunk, covered by a blanket."

"Let's go," said the division head, wondering if he'd be able to get his own packing done that day.

They began to thread their way through the trunks, duffle bags, valises, cartons, etc. etc. It was one of those clear brilliant New England days in September (in those days camps broke up in September, not on August 28) when one was able to feel simultaneously the warmth of the departing summer and the intimations of autumn. Sweaters and a few lumberjackets were in evidence.

"What did he say?" asked the division head.

"Nothing," said the junior counsellor. "He wouldn't say a thing."

The camp followed a policy of checking the kids' trunks on the last day of camp. There wasn't much to steal; in fact the examination was so cursory that any small valuable which a kid might steal (like a mounted butterfly from the nature hut) would almost certainly be overlooked. Only something very large would be noticed.

The division head thought of the great thievery years back, when he had been a camper. One of the boys, on his own, had simply pasted a label on the big Indian war canoe and then called the express company. In the confusion of the last day, nobody had noticed the canoe being hoisted into the truck, which then drove up the path from the lake, past the main house, and onto the road.

"Anything is possible on the last day," he thought, as they came up to Mickey Rosen's trunk.

Now one of the difficulties which confronted the division head was that he was in love with Mickey Rosen's sister. It was a late love, flowered when the season was coming to a close (maybe because the season was coming to a close), but love nevertheless, and the effect of this attachment had been to put him in a kind of protective position toward the boy.

The conflict between duty and love was not fairly joined here, for since this was the last day of camp, what kind of discipline could be invoked?

Keep him out of the evening activity?

But the evening activity was the train, homeward bound.

STORIES by MEYER LIBEN have been published in many periodicals, among them *Accent* and *Horizon*. Born in New York City in 1911, he attended City College. His last previous appearance in COMMENTARY was with two stories, "The Winners" and "The Pharmacist," in April 1954.

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They found the lad sitting, somewhat disconsolately, a bit defiantly, on the steps of his bunk.

The division head waved to him, and the lad walked up slowly.

"What's the idea?"

Mickey shrugged.

The division head opened the trunk, and there, sure enough, unwrapped from the blanket in which the boy had tried to hide it, was the Torah, the Scrolls of the Law from which we read during the Sabbath services.

The division head was truly staggered by the conception, blocked in his expression by love for the boy's sister.

"See," said the junior counsellor, like the oaf in the fairy tale, "see, I told you."

And he gazed into the trunk, fascinated by what he was afraid to believe.

This impasse was deepened by the appearance of the head counsellor, for word of the enormity had spread.

He peered into the trunk, to assure himself of the accuracy of the unbelievable report. Then he turned to Mickey, and asked, in a tone that meant to be strict, authoritarian, but was not deficient in a musing quality:

"Do you realize what you've done, do you realize that you have tried to steal the Torah?"

The boy did not consider that this was a question which demanded an answer, so he remained silent.

"Do you know what it says in that book about stealing, can you tell me that?"

"It says," said the boy, "that 'Thou Shalt Not Steal.'"

"Excellent," said the head counsellor. "It says 'Thou Shalt Not Steal,' so you steal the book where it is written 'Thou Shalt Not Steal.' What made you do it, please explain that."

"I wanted to bring it home to my father," said the boy, looking for support to the division head, who looked away in confusion.

"What do you mean, take it home to your father?" asked the head counsellor. "You know that it is not permitted to keep a Torah in the home, but only in the Ark of the Synagogue."

The youth was quiet in the face of the theology.

"Well," said the head counsellor, looking at his watch and thinking of train-time, "take it back."

The boy took the Torah from the trunk, but at this point there was an interruption from one of the seniors, a particularly privileged senior, whose compound of atheism and theology had made him a nuisance all summer long.

"What do you mean 'take it back'?" asked the privileged senior insolently. "You can't take it back to that Ark, that makeshift Ark, because the congregation is gone, and therefore that hall is no longer a Temple."

"Quiet," said the head counsellor. "The Torah will be put away in its correct place, but first Mickey will bring it back to the place from which he stole it, that is the least he can do."

"You are very lucky," said the head counsellor, "that this is the last day of camp."

"If it weren't the last day," said Mickey, emboldened by the fact that it *was* the last day and that he had two brothers and a sister enrolled as campers, giving him, in those depression days, an unholy economic power, "if it weren't the last day, do you think I'd be crazy enough to try to steal it?"

"Get going," said the head counsellor.

"This is very unusual," said the privileged senior. "He is not even wearing a hat."

At this the junior counsellor, who was quite Orthodox, pulled a skullcap from his pocket and placed it on Mickey's head. Then the procession started out, with Mickey up front, hugging the Torah close, for fear of dropping it.

As they made their way through the crowded thoroughfare, campers and counsellors looked up at the unusual sight; those who were aware of the circumstances were not surprised, others wondered as they idly looked up from their packing chores, while some of the youngsters, considering this a parade, attached themselves to the

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line, only to be chased off, but then trailing along nevertheless.

"It *is* a holiday," confided a junior to a bunkmate. "Tisha b'Av, the anniversary of the destruction of the Temple."

"Then why is Mickey carrying the Torah?" asked his friend. "He's not even thirteen yet."

"Well," said the junior, who was not only weak in history, but who also refused ever to be at a loss, "he is probably a descendant of the Tribe of the Rabbis, they have special privileges."

"Mickey stole the Torah, Mickey stole the Torah."

The freshman started this chant, and a few of the sophs picked it up, but they were quieted by their counsellor.

Mickey disregarded the cries of these small children, and held the sacred scroll closer. The fact is that he was to be confirmed late in September, and that all summer he had been receiving special instruction from the camp rabbi, reading over and over again his portion of the Law, and reciting, day after day, the speech which had been written for him by his city rabbi, though it was touched up here and there by the young seminarian, the camp rabbi.

Mr. Rosen thought that the Bar Mitzvah was too close to the end of the summer to allow for the sojourn in camp, but the director had promised that the boy would receive regular and expert instruction and the Rosens finally agreed.

On their way to the social hall, which was used as a synagogue on inclement Friday evenings and Saturday mornings (otherwise services were held in an outdoor setting, a bit too pagan for some of the more Orthodox visiting fathers), the little group passed the lake.

There was something incongruous about the scene now—the lake seemed so foreign in face of this group symbolizing a people whose destiny has been bound with the desert and with the great metropoleis of history.

How little the Jews have had to do with lakes, these clear inland bodies of water, so self-contained, so secure in their settings of mountain and wood.

Just before they reached the social hall, a boy jumped out and tried to seize the Torah from Mickey, who resisted this onslaught, aided, of course, by the horrified onlookers, who pushed the offending youth away. It was Harry Weiner, Mickey's most formidable rival in incorrigibility.

"What are you doing?" screamed the head counsellor.

"Why should he have it?" asked Harry. "That crook!"

The counsellors were stunned by this curious, altogether meaningless question.

"All the kids seem to be going crazy this last day of camp," said the junior counsellor.

Mickey glared at his rival who, unsuccessful in his bid for the main role, reluctantly joined the onlookers.

They all reached the social hall just as the director came running up from the opposite direction. He was running but tried to give the effect of walking, just as, genuinely horrified, he tried to give the effect of calm.

"Come, come," he said, "let's all get back to our bunks and finish packing."

He took the Torah from the boy's hands, saying:

"I will bring it up to the main house now."

"My God," thought the director, "it surely would have been left here through the winter."

And he thought of the cold, the desolation, the wild animals prowling in the social hall, before the makeshift Ark, clawing. . . .

Then it was his turn to seize the Torah to himself, guiltily preserving what had been saved by an outrageous act.

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FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

THE JEWISH PAST IN AMERICA

What It Was Like Before 1861

CHARLES REZNIKOFF

THE three volumes of *Memoirs of American Jews: 1775-1865,* edited by Jacob Rader Marcus, cover the period from the beginning of the Revolution until the end of the Civil War. Some of the writers are well known, at least to students of American Jewish history; many are unknown except—if at all—to their descendants. Some of the memoirs are extracts from books and others from journals or reminiscences still in manuscript; a few are pieced together from letters, and one is an after-dinner speech as reported in a newspaper. Many show the rise of penniless immigrants to positions of importance, or at least of stability, in the general community; some show the rise of the children of immigrants to positions of importance in the professions—including the military; a few show the general decline in religious observance and religious studies and the steady assimilation of Jews into the Christian community. All this is hardly new; but the memoirs are valuable as source material and as evidence, and, in many cases, in themselves as stories of adventure or records of observation with an interest far from exclusively Jewish.

American Jewish history from 1775 to 1865 may really be divided into three periods: the first, in which the Jews of the British colonies of North America suddenly found themselves in the full light and blaze of the Revolution; the second, in which there was little immigration of Jews; and the third, a time of immigration, chiefly from Central Europe. Most of the memoirs here published belong to this last period, which, although it is the first in which Jews became fairly numerous in America, has not attracted as much attention as it merits from Jewish historians—partly because it lacked the simplification and enchantment of distance. This it is beginning to acquire.

OF THE earliest period, we have in Dr. Marcus's collection the least material because Jews in this country were few then—in all about a thousand or so. Though neither David S. Franks (d. Philadelphia, 1793) nor Mordecai Sheftall (1735-1797), who tell us

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READERS of COMMENTARY are already familiar with three of the items—published in these pages in June and July of last year and January 1956, respectively—that are collected in the *Memoirs of American Jews: 1775-1865,* edited by Jacob Rader Marcus (Jewish Publication Society. Vol. I, 387 pp.; Vol. II, 375 pp.; Vol. III, 430 pp., $4.00 each). Here CHARLES REZNIKOFF surveys the book as a whole, but devoting particular attention to the material on Jewish life in this country before the Civil War. Mr. Reznikoff needs little introduction. A steady contributor to this magazine over the years, both as poet and essayist, he is also the author of many books of fiction, verse, and history. He was born in Brooklyn and trained for the bar at New York University, and from 1928 to 1936 was a member of the staff of *Corpus Juris,* a law encyclopedia. Among his prose works is a novel, *By the Waters of Manhattan.* His last previous contribution to these pages was "The Fifth Book of the Maccabees," a prose poem, in August 1955.

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something of themselves, of their devotion to the American cause, and the tribulations they suffered because of this devotion, was particularly important among the great men of the American Revolution, the fact that they were free to become important at all is interesting and significant. According to tradition, Franks had been president of Shearith Israel of Montreal, but it is doubtful that he had anything to do with his fellow Jews after he became an officer in the Continental army. Sheftall remained a Jew and helped reorganize the Jewish congregation at Savannah after the Revolution.

It will be noted that among the memoir-writers who belong to the second period, and who were descendants of earlier immigrants, some—now that they were citizens with the same rights and almost the same opportunities as Christians—were no longer in trade as their parents or grandparents had been, and in this respect were like children of the later immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe. But if many of the later American Jews went into the learned professions, few in the full-blown idealism of the 19th century thought of a career in the army or navy. One may be, accordingly, somewhat surprised to find at the beginning of the last century American Jews who looked for just such a career: Alfred Mordecai (b. Warrenton, N. C., 1804), for example, went into the army; Uriah P. Levy (b. Philadelphia, 1792), the navy.

The careers of Levy in the navy and Mordecai in the army, it may be added on the basis of their memoirs, form an interesting contrast. Levy began his career as a cabin boy on a merchant vessel, Mordecai as a cadet at West Point. Levy met with antagonism in which anti-Semitism played a part; Mordecai apparently had no trouble at all in this respect. (In the end, solely from the standpoint of rank achieved, Commodore Levy was the more successful, but Major Mordecai left the army at the opening of the Civil War in order not to fight against his country or his native state.) Those who keep preaching the importance of good manners may find a lesson here. Mordecai's father ran one of the best seminaries for girls in the South, and young Mordecai was instructed, no doubt, in those niceties of conduct which marked the well-bred man. It may be doubted that Levy, who had come up from the forecastle, was as well-bred or agreeable. He was also in favor of doing away with the use of the lash in the navy. His experiments with other methods of punishment, although well-intentioned—President Tyler found them so—were bound to arouse criticism, as any such change would in the conservatism of the armed forces. Mordecai's achievements were strictly professional—in the field of ordnance, and such as any soldier could appreciate.

Among other writers of memoirs—in this collection—who belong to the second period are Mordecai Myers (1776-1781) and Mordecai M. Noah (1785-1851). Mordecai Myers, born in Newport, R. I., the son of a Hungarian Jew, was a merchant and auctioneer in New York and, for a while, a trustee of Shearith Israel of that city. When the War of 1812 broke out he was commissioned a captain in the United States army. As he wrote to his friend, Naphtali Phillips, the proprietor and editor of the New York *National Advocate* (Myers jokingly called it a "kasher" newspaper): "Sum must spill there blud and others there ink." Myers was badly wounded at the battle of Chrysler's Field (1813). After the war, he was in the State Assembly as a representative from New York City and, much later, was elected mayor of Schenectady, N. Y. He was married to a non-Jewess, a niece of the doctor who probably saved his life when he was wounded. That he was born a Jew seems to have been a skeleton in the closet of his family, and his memoirs, as we have them (for they were edited), do not mention any Jews as such and are of interest to us chiefly for details of the War of 1812 as it was fought in upper New York state.

Mordecai M. Noah was a journalist but since journalism in those days—until James Gordon Bennett's *Herald*—was more politics than news, he, like Myers, was

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also a politician. He became sheriff of New York City, surveyor of the port, and judge of a minor court. During the War of 1812 he had been appointed the American consul at Tunis. His experience there is best told in his own words:

. . . After the customary salutations and a few inquiries, Commodore Decatur invited me into the cabin, where, after being seated, he went to his *escrutoire* [*sic*] and from among a package of papers he handed me one, saying that it was a despatch from the Secretary of State [James Monroe], and requested me to use no ceremony, but to read it. It had the seal of the United States, which I broke, and, to my great surprise, read [that he was dismissed from the consular service because he was a Jew]. . . .

The receipt of this letter shocked me inexpressibly. . . . I cast my eye hastily on Commodore Decatur; I was satisfied at a glance that he knew not the contents of the letter. It was necessary that he should not, for . . . from my consulate, from the possession of power, respected and feared, I should in all probability [have] gone into a dungeon, neglected and unpitied, and for what? For carrying into effect the express orders of the government!

. . . I folded up the letter with apparent indifference and put it in my pocket, and then proceeded to relate to Commodore Decatur the nature of our dispute with Tunis, which was corroborated by the documents I had prepared and brought with me. . . .

What injury could my religion ["not known in Barbary"] create? I lived like other consuls; the flag of the United States was displayed on Sundays and Christian holidays. The Catholic priest, who came into my house to sprinkle holy water and pray, was received with deference and freely allowed to perform his pious purpose. The barefooted Franciscan, who came to beg, received alms in the name of Jesus Christ. The Greek bishop, who sent me a decorated branch of palm on Palm Sunday, received, in return, a customary donation. The poor Christian slaves, when they wanted a favour, came to me. The Jews alone asked nothing from me. Why then am I to be persecuted for my religion? Although no religious principles are known to the constitution, no peculiar worship connected with the government, yet I did not forget that I was representing a Christian nation. . . ."

The ex-consul returned to the United States and, remaining an ardent American, became an ardent Jew. He was a leader in the Jewish community of New York, launched a wild scheme to settle European Jews on a small island near Buffalo, and was an early Zionist.

Rebecca Gratz (1781-1869) is the subject of a memoir by her niece. During the antebellum period Rebecca Gratz was, as Dr. Marcus says in his introductory note, "probably the outstanding Jewess in the United States." In 1838 she founded what is generally considered the first Jewish Sunday school in this country (modeled on Christian Sunday schools). It is generally supposed—by those who feed eagerly on such crumbs from the tables of the great—that she was the original of Rebecca in Scott's *Ivanhoe*. But Scott is no longer read as religiously as he used to be and the gratitude of American Jews to the founder of the Jewish Sunday school has diminished: it has been said, not without truth, that a Sunday school may be good enough to teach a catechism but not a religion—certainly not Judaism.

THE steady stream of Jewish immigration from Central Europe that had been flowing to the United States ever since Colonial days received a great influx after the failure of the European revolutions of 1848 and the repressive measures that followed. (In speaking of the German Jews of this period, it is necessary to distinguish between Jews from Posen and others. The former, although Prussian by nationality, were in ritual and other respects still Polish, and were so regarded by other German Jews.) Men who had been ready to be imprisoned or to die for freedom were ready, in despair of any local change, to undertake the lesser hardships of emigration to a land where all they had fought for had long been assured. Even if the emigrants had not been actual participants in the protests, riots, and battles—indeed, few were—they must have compared their risks as immigrants with those that had been faced by the revolutionists. Many, too, lost their livelihood in the disorders and hard times of those days. These immigrants were by no means indifferent to liberty for all

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and equality for Jews. ("How happy I was when I reached the promised land of freedom, where the laws, at least, are the same for Jews as for non-Jews. At that time the stigma of inequality burned in me like a fiery coal, because I felt its stings and suffered its pangs," writes Leopold Mayer.) But their first thought, of necessity, was to secure their daily bread.

The later immigrant from Eastern Europe at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, if a Jew and penniless, had a choice: to peddle or become a sewing-machine operator. The earlier immigrant from Central Europe, as a rule, found no shop in which to work; as often as not, if not oftener, he had no trade. He was generally encouraged by fellow Jews who had come before him to turn to peddling, and generally did. "Our people in this country," said a peddler to Isaac Mayer Wise, "may be divided into the following classes: (1) The basket peddler, he is as yet altogether dumb and homeless; (2) the trunk-carrier, who stammers some little English and hopes for better times; (3) the pack-carrier, who carries from 100 to 150 pounds upon his back, and indulges the thought that he will become a businessman some day. In addition to these, there is the aristocracy, which may be divided into three classes: (1) The wagon-baron, who peddles through the country with a one- or two-horse team; (2) the jewelry-count, who carries a stock of watches and jewelry in a small trunk, and is considered a rich man even now; (3) the store-prince, who has a shop and sells goods in it. At first one is the slave of the basket or the pack; then, the lackey of the horse, in order to become, finally, the servant of the shop."

THERE is a certain contempt, among men who work with their hands, for the peddler or the owner of a store, and he has been regarded as a parasite on the labors of the community—a favorite charge of German anti-Semites. The services of those who buy and sell are, of course, dependent upon those who grow and make; but, in supplying the needs of those who grow and make, they enable them to do so and also enable them to enjoy the fruits of the labor of others. As the late Hayim Greenberg said in one of his essays, "Any work which satisfies human needs or is socially useful is productive work."

And in fact, this was recognized to a certain extent in the days of these memoirs. Leopold Mayer, who was never a peddler but a Hebrew teacher and finally a banker, said of the Jews in Chicago about 1850: "Some, loading their goods upon a wagon, others upon their shoulders, followed the honorable vocation of peddling. Honor to them! They were respected and liked by their customers, who every season awaited their arrival before laying in a stock of necessary goods. . . ." And Oscar S. Straus, whose own father had been a peddler, speaking of the Jewish peddlers in the South about the same time, had this to say: "The itinerant merchant . . . filled a real want, and his vocation was looked upon as quite dignified. . . . Then, too, the existence of slavery drew a distinct line of demarcation between the white and black races. This gave to the white visitor a status of equality that probably otherwise he would not enjoy to such a degree. Provided only, therefore, that the peddler proved himself an honorable, upright man, who conscientiously treated his customers with fairness and made no misrepresentations regarding his wares, he was treated as an honored guest by the plantation owners. . . . [He] usually stayed one night at the house of his customer and took his meals with the family. . . . Southern hospitality . . . permitted no pay for board and lodging, and only a small charge for feed for the horses. The peddler in turn usually made a gift to either the lady or her daughter."

Peddling was hard work but it could also be very profitable. "I went by steamer with my goods to Natchez, Miss., bought a horse, and traveled the country—through Mississippi and Louisiana. . . . the country roads were bad, and we had to stand a good deal; the sales were small, but the profits were

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large," wrote Haiman Philip Spitz. The year was 1841. "It was very easy in those days to sell goods [peddling out of Natchez]. There were no stores at every crossroad. There were stores only in the towns," writes Henry Seesel. William Frank, peddling in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, for only one year (1840-41), managed to save $700 to pay the way of his parents, and his brother and sister, to America.

Many took to peddling because in that way they were their own masters: "My disposition," wrote Julius Weis, "had always been to work for myself, rather than to be a clerk for anyone else, and I therefore declined to take a position in a store. . . ." Another advantage of peddling, for the pious Jew, was that he need not work on the Sabbath. Several of the oldest congregations today had their origin in a *minyan* (the number necessary for congregational services—at least ten adult Jews) of young peddlers who bought from the same wholesaler and met once a week in his store to pray on the Sabbath and buy on Sunday. Some, like Henry Stern, peddled to familiarize themselves "with the country, the people, the language."

THE immigrant in this country a century ago settled, as a rule, in the North. There were several reasons for this. In the first place, the average immigrant had to depend for his livelihood on the work of his hands, and in the South he had the competition of slaves. Again, the ports at which almost all the immigrants landed were in the North, and few had money to travel farther; factories had been established in the North and here the immigrant could find work at once; and here, too, were earlier immigrants from his own country who might, if necessary, help him and were at least companions among strangers. Besides, the climate of the North was more like that of Western and Central Europe from which most of the immigrants were coming, and the South had a reputation for sickness.

The South, however, was not altogether unattractive to the Jewish immigrant. The planters were the most important class in a Southern community; even successful lawyers and merchants tried to become planters. There was elbow room and profit, then, for the peddler or local storekeeper. The Yankees had found that out. The Southerners, too, were friendlier to strangers, and Jews, coming from the discrimination and unfriendliness of Europe, appreciated that more than did others. Aaron Hirsch recorded: "Everywhere [Mississippi] I was received kindly. The people did not see any strangers often. . . . I was out four weeks, but never did any planter charge me for board and lodging. They refused even small presents, saying I was a poor boy, a long distance from home, trying to make a living." "People [in Mississippi and Louisiana] before the [Civil] War were entirely different from what they are now. You were welcome at all times and treated with cordiality at every place, if you looked anyway respectable; not as if you were a stranger, but as an old acquaintance, tho you may never have seen the parties before," wrote Philip Sartorius.

Much as Jews—especially immigrants who had never seen a slave until they went south—might deplore slavery, or particular incidents in connection with it, those who settled in the South sooner or later had slaves just as their neighbors did. It was probably unavoidable in a Southern community because of the reluctance of white men and women to do for hire the usual work of slaves. "As a boy brought up in the South," wrote Oscar S. Straus, "I never questioned the rights or wrongs of slavery. Its existence I regarded as [a] matter of course, as most other customs or institutions. The grown people of the South, whatever they thought about it, would not, except in rare instances, speak against it, and even then in the most guarded and private manner." Louis Stix in Ohio did speak up (in 1846), but even there it was not liked. "Among my help [driving hogs] were some colored men. As we entered the dining room I was shown a separate table, which I declined. From this fact, I became known as an abolitionist, which was the actual truth, and which fact,

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when known, caused me the loss of a number of friends. . . ."

THE puritanic Jew is in these volumes: "I did not like city life [in New Orleans] in the style in which it was conducted at that time—too much fun and devilment for me," wrote Haiman Spitz; and so is the profligate: "I had a partner with me, Sam Rothchild . . . he was a smart fellow. I knew the fellow made as high as [$]100 a day and go to bed penniless. The next place we stopped was the mouth of Red River, where Sam gambled all our money off and sold the boat and stock to another flatboat man for a negroe girl, took her to New Orleans and traded her off for tobacco." So writes Philip Sartorius.

Here, too, is the Jew who denies that he is a Jew; the Jew who neither denies nor affirms but belongs to "all tastes and creeds"; and the much commoner instance, then and now, of the Jew who marries a Christian woman without becoming a Christian himself, and whose children are brought up as Christians or become Christians. August Bondi met two of the first sort in the army: ". . . To my knowledge there were three *Jehudim* in the Fifth K's [Fifth Kansas Cavalry]: Marcus Wittenberg, Co. F; Simon Wolff, of Co. E; and myself. Some time in July I accosted Wittenberg, asked him if he was a *Jehudi;* he seemed at first not to understand, then I repeated my inquiry: 'Are you a Jew?' He answered: 'I'm a Hungarian'. . . . A few days after news of his death reached the regiment, his chum . . . brought me some letters addressed to the deceased to interpret, as they were written in a language unknown to him. There were letters from his parents, written in Hebrew [Yiddish—C.R.], among others, informing him of the date of Rosh Hashono and Jom-Kipur. . . . The other *Jehudi,* Simon Wolff, would likewise not acknowledge being a *Jehudi.* He was sergeant of Co. E, and on the colonel's staff. I let him alone. . . ." One of the second sort was Max Maratzek, "impresario." ". . . I had scarcely attained the age of eighteen than I shaped my creed, my political belief, and my taste to suit everybody. In other words, I resolved to belong to all tastes and creeds, political or spiritual, in a general way, but to none in particular. Therefore, I believe in God, and endeavor to do my duty, without calling myself Roman Catholic, Episcopalian, member of the Greek Church, Lutheran, or Presbyterian." It may be worth noting that he does not mention "Jew," careful in his catholicity and pretended candor to avoid the very word.

The Rothschild who visited the United States just before the Civil War met Jews who had done very well in New Orleans: Judah P. Benjamin, and H. M. Hyams, lieutenant-governor of the state, and Edwin W. Moïse, speaker of the Louisiana House, all married to Christians without becoming Christians themselves or remaining Jews either. Louis A. Gratz when he arrived in this country "could barely memorize the English names and prices of my stock and I could not answer any other question." He enlisted as a private in a Union regiment and in less than two years was a major, commanding the Sixth Kentucky Cavalry. After the war, he studied law and married a Christian girl of good family in Knoxville: "I thought it necessary to tie myself more closely to the people living in this town."

THE writer of memoirs cannot tell us about himself without telling us something of the world about him. We go down "stoney" King Street in Charleston, South Carolina, with Joseph Lyons in 1833 and notice, as he does, the smell of coal smoke "very perceptible"; in Philadelphia, that year, we admire with him the brick houses: "Many of them have the doors painted of pure white, and all the brass work on them silverplated. The steps are of white marble, and the small, iron balustrades of blackened iron work. . . . The window panes [are] of a large plate glass, as it is called." We ride the stage in 1817 from Warrenton, North Carolina, to Richmond, Virginia, with Alfred Mordecai, then thirteen years of age, and his father, their "baggage secured to a rack behind with leather straps. As the journey

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was made partly at night, we had a small cord tied to our trunk and passed into our hands, that we might know if the trunk was cut off." In New York in 1819, we gaze with Alfred at his uncle's fireplace, "faced with blue Dutch tiles, containing a Scripture story . . . ;" and years afterwards, at West Point, hear "the shout, almost of derision, which greeted, at even our *military* mess, the first announcement of Gen'l Jackson as a candidate for the presidency."

Fellow Jews, we go with Henry Cohen in Philadelphia in 1845 to "Abraham Hart, who . . . kept open house on the eve of Purim. . . . [Henry Cohen] dressed as an Eastern Pilgrim, and of course masked, which was the custome [*sic*] in those days." Leopold Mayer, visiting Dr. Leo Merzbacher's "Reform" congregation in Christie Street, New York (1850), notices that the men are divided into two groups, "one class composed of those with hats, the other of those with caps." Across the continent, in San Francisco, we watch with Toby Rosenthal's eyes of a painter (about 1865) "the herds of cattle . . . driven to town by the lasso-swinging buckaroos. . . . These mounted horsemen still wore their old costume: a flat sombrero with a wide ribbon and colored tassels, a short but richly embroidered jacket, a colorful band around the waist, leather trousers reaching to the knee, and, with all this, huge, mediaeval spurs with little bells. . . ."

Far to the south, "At Cerro Gordo [during the Mexican War]. . . . Step by step we . . . pull our guns up by ropes, forty or fifty men, attached with one hand to the rope, and with the other hand getting a hold on some grass cactus or any other old thing, so as to keep a footing and not to roll down again, with gun and all, and the Mexicans continually firing on us, from above" (Jacob Hirschhorn). At St. Louis in 1855, "the graveled river bank piled high with a mass of merchandise: bales of cotton, hogsheads of sugar and molasses, stacks of wood, and great stores to be transported to the military posts and new settlements up the Mississippi and the Missouri rivers. . . . A line of low wooden buildings, mostly with flaring signs of groceries, or cheap restaurants, formed the background. . . ." The "business part" of St. Paul as also seen by Amelia Ullman: ". . . one or two good-sized brick buildings and a collection of rough, unpainted, frame shanties . . . only a few persons upon the street [for it was Sunday] and most of these were tall, erect, wild-looking creatures, wrapped up in colored blankets and having feathers braided in their long black hair."

Here are those who saw "Shelley plain," as August Bondi saw John Brown wearing a plush cap and with a cavalry saber and "a very large revolver"; as Major Raphael J. Moses saw the Confederate generals, Jeb Stuart and his banjo player thrumming and singing, "Come jine the cavalry," Pickett, who led the charge at Gettysburg, with his hair in long ringlets, and Lee, "calm as a summer cloud"; and as Simon Wolf saw Lincoln, tall, gaunt, and solemn, "his clothes hanging loosely, eyes beaming. . . ." Heyman Herzberg went through the battle lines of Confederate and Union armies twice; and, for another example of adventure, Lewis Leon fought as a private in a North Carolina regiment, drinking "coffee" made of parched corn, living on crackers with worms in them and mule meat, trying to sleep in spite of the owls hooting in the swamps all around, seeing "The Yankees . . . poorly buried . . . several heads, hands, and feet sticking out of the ground, where the rain had washed the dirt off them."

But, for the most part, here are the private campaigns men have waged for their livelihood, obscure griefs that only a handful have known, and small triumphs. However, these are the coral whose skeletons helped build the foundations of our society; and to lift their memoirs from obscurity and publish them, as Dr. Marcus has done, is a great service to our understanding of the Jews in this country and the tides in which they had their being.

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CEDARS OF LEBANON

HOW I CHOSE TO COME HERE

From "Bleter fun Mein Lebn"

ABRAHAM CAHAN

FOR over fifty years ABRAHAM CAHAN (1860-1951) was the chief editor of the New York *Jewish Daily Forward*, a Socialist organ which became the largest and most popular Yiddish newspaper in the world. He was also the author of numerous works in English, among them the distinguished novel *The Rise of David Levinsky* (see the late Isaac Rosenfeld's article "America, Land of the Sad Millionaire" in the August 1952 COMMENTARY), and of a five-volume autobiography published by the Forward Association, *Bleter fun Mein Lebn* ("Leaves from My Life"), from which the following selection is taken. Cahan here describes the events that led to his decision to leave Russia for America. The parties he calls the "Americans" and the "Palestinians" were actually Am Olam and BILU, two movements born in response to the wave of pogroms that swept Russia in the 1880's after the assassination of Czar Alexander II.

This selection has been translated from the Yiddish by Jacob Sloan, and takes up Cahan's story just after he had fled from Velisz to Mohilev in 1881 to escape arrest for revolutionary activities.—ED.

TWO women directed me to a hostel owned by a man called Machover on the other side of the large courtyard. I crossed over and entered the inn. There I was received by the innkeeper himself, a middle-aged man with a distracted expression and a thick beard.

"Can I put up here until after Passover?" I asked him.

Instead of replying, he asked me in a low and mysterious voice, "Running away from the *priziv* [military service]?"

His tone struck a sympathetic chord. To tell the truth, I had not prepared any story beforehand. But his implication spared me the trouble.

"Yes, from the *priziv*," I replied.

He smiled, and gestured with his hand, as though to say: "It'll be all right." . . .

The next day the mistress of the house said to me: "My son Elie will soon be coming home for Passover, and then things will be gayer." At the same time she informed me that her Elie was the manager of the diligence office in Nevel. . . . The name Nevel burst upon me like a thunderclap. For I immediately remembered who the junior Machover was.

At Succoth time—that is, a half year before—Zilstein and I had visited Trotsky and Yonovitz in Nevel, in the province of Vitebsk, and the whole town had buzzed with our visit. After all, we teachers were a kind of government official, and we paraded around looking every bit the part in our blue cockaded caps. The most important householders in Nevel had invited us to visit them at home at various times during our stay. Things had been lively. When we walked down the street people used to stop and stare at us. So there was no question in my mind now but that the junior Machover had seen me more than once. Besides, when we left Nevel he had sold me the ticket to travel by diligence (as far as Vitebsk). Nor was there any doubt in my mind but that he had heard of my having run away from Velisz, for Nevel is in the same province,

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and the exciting news had probably reached thither.

It was logical to assume that when the junior Machover found me in his father's home he would become frightened and tell his parents who I was. Most likely the family would ask me to leave. Whether or not they did so, it was not desirable for me to be recognized. . . .

[Nevertheless] I decided to stay on. If Elie should recognize me I would deny that I was myself. At that time I looked much different from the way I had in Nevel, not at all the government official. En route I had had a hair-cut that left my sidelocks unshorn. I now looked like a respectable young man of the old-fashioned school. So, at least, I thought. Whenever I looked in the mirror I was delighted with my reflection. Yet, at the same time, I experienced a pang at my *yeshiva bocher* appearance.

So I decided to appear before Elie in my false identity of Lipschitz, and act as though I had never heard of anyone called Cahan.

II

ONE afternoon (it was almost Passover time), Mirel [the Machovers' eldest daughter] came into my room with a shining face. She had happy news for me: Elie had arrived! I hope that what I wished her never came true. . . .

Putting on an expression of the greatest delight, I went to present myself, Mirel going ahead of me. As I strode through the hallway, I saw to it that my trousers were correctly thrust into my boots; I wound my scarf around my neck, and pushed my hat back so that the curly earlocks would show. I was almost positive that I would pass, for, after all, Elie was not personally acquainted with me. What if he had seen me a couple of times on the street, and again when I had taken the diligence for Velisz at his ticket office? My appearance had then been quite different.

I remembered *him* quite well, for I have a good memory for faces. Besides, he had an unusual appearance; it was easy to recognize him, for he was exceptionally short, and had a roly-poly face, pug nose, and blond beard. His diminutive stature was enough to provoke attention. . . .

"Here is the young man," the senior Machover said to his son. . . .

Elie actually blanched with amazement.

"*What* did you say your name was?" he asked.

"Lipschitz," I replied, looking him straight in the eye.

His glance flew to my boots, my hat, my sidelocks. "Weren't you in Nevel a few months ago?" he asked, in confusion.

"Where's that—Level?" I asked, in mock ignorance.

Then he turned to his father. "If I hadn't been told otherwise, I could have sworn that this man was Cahan, the teacher from Velisz."

"What's that you say?" I asked again, wearing an expression of curiosity. "Cahan?"

He told me . . . about Cahan and Zilstein and their friends, the teachers of Nevel, and how they had passed Succoth week together; how the householders of the city had entertained them, and what a lively young fellow that Cahan was. . . .

THERE was a young man from Nevel called Tropanov who used to frequent the Machovers'; he was studying at a school for healers in Mohilev. Elie had brought him regards from his parents, and Tropanov now visited him daily. When he heard that I resembled a school teacher called Cahan who had spent a week in his native city, and that this Cahan had been invited to all the important homes, he began to ask the Machovers whether Cahan had not been invited to his father's house as well, and that turned out to be the case.

Tropanov was very homesick, and the fact that I resembled a man who had visited his father's house was enough to interest him in me. He began to tell me all about Nevel. In turn I asked him about the school for healers where he was studying. Thus we became closer acquaintances. . . . Tropanov was avid for my friendship, and made me his most intimate confidant. So it came about that Tropanov once told me in confidence that there was a man called Belkin who had come to Mohilev to register young men who wished to go to Palestine.

"I am telling you this because I know you're no ordinary man," he explained to me. "You don't think I really believe that you are running away from the *prizivʔ* Tell me, who are you?"

He assured me that he could keep a se-

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cret. But I denied that I had any secrets, and aloofly poked fun at his suspicions. But I did want to see Belkin. So I asked him to bring Belkin to see me.

III

THE columns of the Russian Jewish weeklies *Rusky Ievrei, Rozsviet,* and *Vozchod* were at that time full of debates between proponents of two parties, the "Americans" and the "Palestinians." This was after the series of pogroms which broke out in southern Russia in 1881, on the heels of the assassination of Alexander the Second by terrorists belonging to the revolutionary Narodnaya Volya ("Back to the People") movement. As a result of these pogroms a section of the young Jewish intellectuals concluded that Russia could never be a home for Jews, and that it was necessary to find a true home for the Jewish people elsewhere. But where? Some were for America, others advocated Palestine.

Here is an incident typifying the mood of many young Jewish intellectuals at that time. A group of Jewish university students entered a synagogue in Kiev that was crowded with melancholy, tearful worshipers. One of the students, a slim young man called Alenikov, took the dais and addressed the audience in Russian:

"We are your brothers. We are Jews like you. We regret that until now we have always considered ourselves Russians, and not Jews. The events of the past few weeks—the pogroms in Yelizavetgrad, in Balta, here in Kiev, and in other cities—have convinced us that we were terribly wrong. Yes, we *are* Jews."

It is unnecessary to describe the effect of these words on the Jewish community.

These students belonged to the "American" party. The nationalist movement began to make inroads among young Russian Jewish intellectuals at that time. Some of them became so ardent in their convictions that they practically stopped speaking Russian altogether and began speaking Yiddish exclusively, although their Yiddish had deteriorated through disuse. Other enthusiasts discarded their Russian-style names and began to use their Jewish equivalents. Yakov, for example, took to calling himself Yankel; Natasta would answer only to the name of Etel.

However, there were very few such extreme Jewish nationalists, and the proportion of even moderate nationalists to the total Jewish intellectual movement was inconsiderable. It sounds incredible nowadays, but there were some Jewish intellectuals who went so far as to regard the anti-Semitic riots as "a good thing." Their theory was that the pogroms were the "instinctive" outbreak of the revolutionary Russian masses. The benighted peasants knew that the Czar, his officialdom, and the *zhids* were blood-sucking parasites. So the peasants of Malorussia [the Ukraine] had attacked the Jewish usurers first of all. The revolutionary flame had first consumed the Jews, but would inevitably fan out to include the *chinovnikes* [government officials] and eventually the Czar himself.

Such, in brief, was the explanation for the pogroms that many Jewish and non-Jewish revolutionaries offered. Some of the members of the underground Narodnaya Volya movement issued a proclamation to the pogromists in the Ukraine based on the reasoning I have given above. (It was published in the sixth number of *Narodnaya Volya,* their official organ.) The proclamation concluded by encouraging the pogromists to finish their revolutionary work—the extermination of the Jews was not the final goal. One of the authors of this manifesto was a Jew.

The provinces of Vilna and Vitebsk were some distance from the areas where the pogroms took place. We only heard of them at second hand. But I remember quite distinctly a conversation I had in Vilna with another member of our revolutionary circle. We had read an article about the whole subject of the relation of the pogroms to revolution and I recall that we both agreed with the author of the article that the pogrom had been aimed at Jewish "exploiters," and was destined to be the first flaring up of that revolutionary flame which would eventually consume the throne, the capitalists, and every form of oppression.

I was then still a raw youth, and had very little knowledge of the world. I read a great deal and felt strongly; but my reading and feelings did not lead me to any clarity of conviction. My opinions were definite, but insubstantial. And, truth to tell, almost the whole revolutionary movement of Russia at

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that time consisted of raw youths like me; even if our leaders were comparatively mature men, their actions were nevertheless juvenile.

However, not all the revolutionaries interpreted the pogroms as a sign of imminent revolution. Many held a contrary opinion, namely, that the government had itself instigated the pogroms to save the throne from the threat of revolution. That is to say, the spirit of uprising had really expressed itself —but the government had diverted it from its natural channel by making the Jews the scapegoat. The government agents had persuaded the peasants that the Jews, and not the Czar and his despotic, corrupt government, were responsible for the country's unhappiness.

It was common then and for many years afterward to describe the Russian government's policy as that of using the Jews as a "lightning rod." As proof, advocates of this theory cited the fact that in almost all the pogroms the government, instead of dispersing the pogromists or arresting and punishing them, actually encouraged and incited them to new acts of terrorism. There were exceptions; but generally speaking the police and other government officials acted outrageously. It was rumored that the new Czar had ordered the peasants to make pogroms against the Jews. The government did not deny these rumors—in many cases it turned out that the leaders of the pogromists were government agents disguised as peasants. Though it would be foolish to say that the government officially organized the pogroms, there can be no doubt that unofficially the police and many government agents directly or indirectly encouraged them after they had once broken out. Thus the first pogrom, which took place in Yelizavetgrad, was certainly unpremeditated. It began with a conflict between a Jewish innkeeper and a drunken peasant. But the attacks on Jews immediately spread to other localities; many people argued that the government had seen the Yelizavetgrad pogrom as offering it a good opportunity, and had, directly or indirectly, sanctioned the pogroms in other cities and towns. And indeed there was very convincing evidence that all the anti-Semitic incidents, which fell into a characteristic pattern, bore the imprint of the same hand. . . .

IV

Two factions had sprung up. One, the "Americans," believed that Russian Jews should seek a new home in America, the country that was the most prosperous in the world and offered the best prospects for immigrants. The "Palestinians," on the other hand, agitated for emigration to Palestine, the ancient home of the Jewish people. Israel Belkin was one of the first "Palestinians," and he had come to Mohilev to register anyone who was willing to accompany him to the land of Israel to establish a colony. He was one of the pioneers of the Zionist movement.

I was a regular reader of the Russian Jewish press, and I had read many articles pro and con on both sides. But I had never really been interested in the subject. Now, however, when Tropanov told me all about Belkin and what he was doing, I was intrigued. Belkin struck me as a mysterious individual, and his registry aroused my curiosity. Besides, I longed for an intimate conversation with an intelligent man. I was isolated from my friends, and this Belkin, an active public figure of the new mold, and an idealist to boot, caught my fancy—he was one of us. Perhaps he could give me some good advice, or the address of a Swiss contact.

The next morning Tropanov appeared with Belkin, who was a medium-sized young man with blond hair and a frank, honest look about him. I asked Tropanov if he would mind leaving us alone for a few minutes, and he left. After a few minutes of conversation Belkin impressed me favorably as a serious man. He explained his idea to me and the plan to emigrate to Palestine. He tried to propagandize briefly, but soon perceived that his words were falling on deaf ears.

By the time we had been together for an hour I had come to feel that this was a man I could trust. So I told him the true reason for my desire to leave Russia. However, I did not go so far as to tell him my plan to get to Poland eventually, and join Yatzkowitz. I merely informed Belkin that I was going to Switzerland, and that I was a Socialist first and foremost and did not believe in the Palestinian solution.

As I remember it, we did not spend much time debating principle. Belkin soon began

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to appeal to me on the ground of my personal future. I would eventually be coming back to Russia as an illegal with a false passport, and would take part in the revolutionary movement once again. Sooner or later, they would arrest me. I would be committing suicide—and for whose sake? For the Russian peasants, the pogromists! But in Palestine I could help realize an ideal that would bring happiness to my people—at the same time I would not be risking my freedom and life. And if I really wanted to serve my socialist ideal, why was I intent on going to Switzerland, of all places? Why not America?

Belkin then told me that there were many Jewish Socialists who were emigrating from Russia to the United States, with the idea of setting up communes there. He told me some of the details of this plan. I replied that if the Russian people were free and could be told the truth, everything would be different. The Russian people had first to be liberated. Then there would be no more pogroms, and Jews would enjoy the same rights as non-Jews: all men would be free and equal.

Nevertheless, I was fascinated by the notion of Socialists emigrating as a group to America. I conjured up a fantastic picture of what Socialist life would be like in far-off America, of a society where there was no such thing as mine and thine, where all people would be brothers, and happy. I had used to imagine that such an ideal could be realized only in the dim future. Now I visualized the prospect of Utopia's being realized immediately—and I would participate!

True, I had read about the "Socialist" communes that Robert Owen had tried to establish and which had failed. But they had all been founded along fallacious lines. On the basis of Belkin's few words I concluded that the new Jewish colonies in America would realize Socialism as it should be realized. Thus Belkin, the "Palestinian," made me an "American." More specifically, he made me enthusiastic over the possibility of establishing Socialist communes in the United States.

What Belkin had told me was that there were thousands of prospective Jewish immigrants to the United States who were gathered in Brod, in Galicia, waiting transportation. These included many Socialists eager to go to America and, in founding Socialist Jewish communes, to begin a new chapter in the life of the Jewish people.

The reasoning behind this project ran something like this: Jews were generally condemned for being merchants, middlemen, and usurers. Well, they would show the world that they could do useful and productive work, preferably on the land. Traditionally, work on the land was considered the most noble kind. Perhaps this idea stemmed from the fact that at that time the largest Jewish populations were concentrated in countries like Russia that were primarily agricultural. The early Russian revolutionaries idealized the peasant as the true provider of Russia. Jews, however, could not and did not work on the land. They were in business, as middlemen for the peasants. Hence in Russia both the "Palestinians" and the "Americans" agreed that the chief hope for the Jewish people lay in their transformation into a people of farmers. They differed only in that the former regarded the land of Israel, and the latter the United States, as the fit place for this transformation to take place.

It would have been dangerous for the Russian Jewish periodicals to have written openly about Socialist communes. That is why I was not aware until I spoke to Belkin that the "Americans" included Socialists who were intent on emigrating to the United States to establish communes there.

Belkin bade me a cordial farewell, wishing me a happy journey to wherever I was going. He left me in a fever of enthusiasm. I walked up and down my room in great emotion. America! To journey to that far, far land! To build a paradise on earth! Men to be transformed into angels! All my earlier plans suddenly fell apart. I felt myself an "American." I was walking on air.

Right there, in that room in Machover's inn, my decision was born: I would go to America.

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ON THE HORIZON

THE LITVINOV "DIARIES"

Literary Detective Story

BERTRAM D. WOLFE

SOMETIME in 1952 or early 1953, Gregory Bessedovsky, a former Soviet diplomat resident in Paris, approached officials of various governments and representatives of publishing houses with a manuscript purporting to be the diary of Maxim Litvinov, who had died in 1951. At the suggestion of a high official of the British Foreign Office, a British publisher, André Deutsch, asked the historian Edward Hallett Carr to investigate the manuscript's authenticity. After reading the Russian typescript, Professor Carr encouraged Deutsch to go ahead with the book, and undertook to go to Paris himself for further checking. There he picked up the following trail: Gregory Bessedovsky, the man offering the manuscript for sale, said he had gotten it from a Mr. X, a Russian businessman in Paris ("politically colorless"), who had gotten it from a Mr. Y resident in Stockholm, who had gotten it from the late Alexandra Kollontay, then Russian ambassadress to Sweden, who had gotten it from Litvinov himself. Mr. X proved of no interest; Mr. Y refused to come to Paris or to meet Professor Carr in Stockholm, but consented to answer written questions "given to Bessedovsky."

Professor Carr wrote an interim report giving it as his conclusion that the manuscript "has a *prima facie* claim to be regarded as authentic, and a serious historical document." If Mr. Y should answer his written questions satisfactorily, Carr declared, he would be willing to write a signed introduction and supply notes. If not, he still thought the diary should be published, would give Deutsch help and advice, but would withhold the use of his name. Carr received satisfactory answers, wrote an introduction, and either prepared or gave advice on the preparation of notes.

It was at this point that the writer of these lines was brought into the affair by an American publisher as Professor Carr had been brought in by the British house. The publisher, whose name does not matter, since he ultimately decided against publication, received a microfilm of the Russian typescript, a history of the manuscript thus far, and a copy of the Carr interim report.

The microfilm showed one hundred sheets typewritten in Russian, with not a single alteration or correction in handwriting. At one point there did appear, however, a hand-drawn Chinese character, of which more later. The entries were scrappy and disjointed. Many were fragments of sentences ending with three dots. Some entries bore a date, usually only a year, or a year and one or more months. Page 1 of the microfilm began with what is now the sec-

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THE "diaries of Maxim Litvinov" reveal once again how compatible Soviet, or Stalinist, sympathies are with a furtive kind of anti-Semitism. BERTRAM D. WOLFE, the noted authority on the history of Bolshevism, is a steady contributor to this magazine. Born in Brooklyn, where he still lives, he was educated at City College, Columbia, and the University of Mexico. He is the author of a life of Diego Rivera, of *Three Who Made a Revolution*, and of the recent *Six Keys to the Soviet System* (Beacon Press). His last previous appearance in these pages was in June with an analysis of the significance of the 20th Congress of the Russian Communist party, "Stalinism Versus Stalin."

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ond entry in the book; the first entry was somehow added later. The microfilm began with "May-June, 1926" and ended vaguely in 1936, forming about three-quarters of the book as it now appears.* I was subsequently to learn that this same 100-frame microfilm had been sold earlier to a government official as the "complete diary."

I had long known that Litvinov was secretly alienated from Stalin by the blood purges of the 1930's, which had claimed all his chief assistants and intimates in the Soviet Foreign Office and its embassies, and only narrowly missed Litvinov himself. Another diplomat whom I knew to be deeply disaffected had been Alexandra Kollontay. At the end of World War II, Litvinov had tried to hint to one of our high officials that America was engaging in dangerous appeasement of Soviet demands which might later lead to another war. When the official failed to take the hint, Litvinov had braved death to call in Richard C. Hottelet, one of our most respected journalists and commentators, and using scarcely veiled "Aesopian language," he had made the warning more explicit. I know that Hottelet had told American diplomatic officers, but had honorably refrained from publishing his "scoop," until natural death, that most unnatural of deaths for an Old Bolshevik, had put Litvinov out of danger. With this background in mind, I approached the diary with eagerness and a predisposition to believe in its authenticity.

THE opening pages were not reassuring. They began with the first of a series of visits from a rabbi named Schechtman, who comes to Litvinov as one Jew to another to complain that the League of the Godless had looted two synagogues and arrested the rabbi of Kiev on charges of currency speculation. Litvinov promises to intervene, although he knows that "Koba [Stalin] doesn't like me to interfere in questions concerning the Jewish religion." The last time he tried to help non- or anti-Bolshevik Jews, Stalin "threatened to bring the matter to the attention of the Central Control Commission. . . . I couldn't help smiling at the threat; Soltz, the head of the C.C.C., is the son of the rabbi of Vilna."

Thus the opening passage presented Litvinov as a philo-Semitic Jew, ready to defend any and every Jew against his government and his party. The same un-Communist Jewish solidarity is attributed to the fanatical head of the Central Control Commission, Soltz. Actually, both Litvinov and Soltz had rejected their Jewish heritage in their youth. Their Jewish origin tended to make them more rather than less hostile toward religious and anti-Communist Jews. But such passages, in which all Jews in the Communist camp are portrayed as holding with each other and with non- and anti-Communist Jews against the party, are scattered through the diary. The Jewish Kaganovich gives it as his opinion that "all Jewish members of the party should be Trotsky's declared and convinced enemies." In the late 20's Litvinov is portrayed as getting interested (because "as a Jew he had no right to refuse assistance") in protecting Zionists in Russia from persecution, arrest, and deportation to Siberia. In actual fact, Zionism was outlawed as early as 1919, and all known Zionists were either dead or in Siberia before the diary opens. I realized that I was dealing with something which I have frequently met in French boulevard "revelations": the "international Jewish conspiracy," the myth of a Jewish solidarity overriding all political and other differences.

I opened my report to the American publisher with this observation. He in turn sent it to the British publisher, who may or may not have forwarded it to Bessedovsky and Carr. At any rate, when the book appeared, none of these passages was excised, but the first journal entry on Schechtman had mysteriously become the second journal entry. Professor Carr, who writes that the "problem of authenticity was further complicated after my return to London by the receipt of another instalment . . . the whole section from 1937 onward," has nothing to say about a new first entry, except to observe that "the conversation with Trotsky and Yoffe in 1926 with which the Journal opens . . . shows an intimate knowledge of party affairs."

Notes for a Journal, by Maxim Litvinov. Introduction by E. H. Carr. London: André Deutsch, 303 pp., 18s. American edition, Introduction by E. H. Carr and Prefatory Note by General Walter Bedell Smith. William Morrow, 347 pp., $3.75.

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Without stopping to check, I read the microfilm through from end to end, but could not find so much as a line that was in Litvinov's style. To be sure, he was never much of a writer or theoretician, but we have from his pen and tongue a multitude of speeches, prepared and extempore, interviews with the press, articles, pamphlets, reminiscences, memoranda, diplomatic and semi-diplomatic notes, open letters, political letters, purely personal letters. The style in all of these is distinguished by directness, simplicity bordering on artlessness, frankness and explicitness insofar as creed, overriding instructions, and special pleading permitted. And always there was a sort of workman-like clarity. Not a line in all these hundred microfilm pages (or in the material which bobbed up later), not even by imitation or accident, was in Maxim Litvinov's public or private style. Not a hint of his showmanship and public triumphs at Geneva, in Washington, or at the League of Nations. Litvinov once remarked: "The idea of collective security, the formulation, 'peace is indivisible,' and the definition of aggression and the aggressor, are perhaps my contribution to the abstract science of peace." When he advanced these "contributions" they were part of the fraudulent peace campaigns of the Soviet Union, but that he had increasingly come to believe in them as his contribution to his country and his time is proved by his hazardous interview with Richard Hottelet. With false pathos, as the diary draws to a close, its author writes: "All my life is in these notes . . . And my work . . . Some day history will pass its judgment . . ."* Yet there is nothing in the diary of that which Litvinov had come to feel was his life's real contribution.

In his introduction, Professor Carr suggests that the "conspicuous incoherence of the document, and the abrupt changes of mood and style, are perhaps an argument in its favor." "It is difficult," he adds, "to avoid the hypothesis that at least two hands have been at work on the document." But the question remains whether there is any reason for believing that either of these hands was Litvinov's. If style is the man, then somewhere, either by studied imitation or by accident, the man Litvinov should appear in these pages.

Then whose hand, or hands, had written it? Whose style or touch might be recognized? Available to me were the same clues as were available to Professor Carr, except that I could not interview Bessedovsky or Mr. X, or write to Mr. Y. So the search led me to a study of the writings of Gregory Bessedovsky, who had left the service of the Soviets some twenty-five years before.

I began with the peculiar fact that on page 11 of the microfilm, the diarist had taken the trouble to draw a Chinese ideograph. Litvinov knew no Chinese; drawing or brushing in ideographs is a complicated business—more incredible is it still to remember a single ideograph's form from the year 1926 to the time when the diary was dictated or typed. According to the diary, Karakhan, Soviet Ambassador to China, was ignorant of Chinese despite his vainglorious pretensions to the contrary. Mao Tse-tung is pictured as having been in Moscow in 1926 (there is ample proof that he was not) in order to consult with Russian leaders. He delivers an address in halting Russian, and when he gets stuck, draws a Chinese ideograph to represent the word "eloquence," whereupon Karakhan volunteers the translation "wooden mouth."†

On page 141 of Bessedovsky's *Revelations of a Soviet Diplomat* (London, 1931), the author writes that during the year 1927 while he was in Japan he studied the Japanese language. Japanese has the same written characters as Chinese. "Every day I learned a half dozen hieroglyphs." On page 149, he tells how he made a laughable mistake owing to a confusion of ideographs, which led him to address a prince as "your imperial electricity" when he meant to say "your imperial highness." This was the clue I was looking for, and it led me to additional discoveries, of which I cite only a few:

1. On pages 42-43 Litvinov makes an estimate of the Soviet diplomat Dogalevsky. The passage is an adaptation of page 163 of Bessedovsky.

*The three dots (. . .) do not represent omissions by the present writer, but are in the microfilm and text as published.

†The ideograph itself has been omitted from the published version of *Notes for a Journal*, but the reference to it can be found on pages 36-37.

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2. On page 42, Litvinov notes the "filthy habits" (now translated "bad habits") of his chief Chicherin, who works all night, plays piano at every hour of the day or night, makes Litvinov come to see him at two in the morning, and is then playing Chopin. It is highly improbable that as late as May 1926, Litvinov would have noted Chicherin's habits in one of his first diary entries, for he would have been familiar with them for years, as was everyone who dealt with Chicherin. But it is less unnatural that Bessedovsky should mention them in his first reference to Chicherin, whose habits he knew only from gossip. Actually pages 16-17 of the *Journal* are an adaptation of Bessedovsky, pages 93-95. Moreover, the diary has Litvinov say: "Chopin is his favorite, and he has no use for any other composer. . . ." The real Litvinov would have known that Chicherin's favorite composer was Mozart.

3. There is a peculiarly disproportionate amount of attention given to trivial scandals in a few of the world's capitals, almost always heard about from a third party, just as some minor official in any foreign service might have heard about them. Certain capitals are the subject of frequent allusions and detailed gossip, while others, no less important, are never even mentioned. Places that unaccountably attracted the diarist's interest for a certain period abruptly stop being referred to. For a space there are trivia from Warsaw, where Bessedovsky held a minor post in the Russian embassy from September 1923 to October 1925. The dates of the reports Litvinov receives from and about "Viktor" (Viktor Kopp) in Japan coincide with those of Bessedovsky's own year there, and the material resembles pages 131-35 and 137-40 of Bessedovsky's book. Litvinov receives news from Harbin that danger threatens Soviet possession of the Chinese-Eastern railway. Bessedovsky's book reveals that he was in Harbin at the end of 1927 "to see what was happening in the territory of the Chinese-Eastern railroad, and to have some conversations with its Soviet staff."

4. Before his defection Bessedovsky spent some time in the Soviet embassy in Paris under Dogalevsky. The details on Dogalevsky's life, appearance, and ways given in the diary, of Rakovsky's difficulties in Paris, the circumstances of his recall, and all the revelations about the "Athenian nights," the "orgies" and the moral lapses of Soviet officials in Paris are closely paralleled in Bessedovsky's book. By a suggestive coincidence, Litvinov's interest in this or another foreign capital and his knowledge of the underworld aspects of Soviet diplomatic life there and of the life of that capital's statesmen coincide in point of time with Bessedovsky's stay in that place, and seem to fade when Bessedovsky moves on. After Bessedovsky's break with the Soviet Foreign Office, the diary, to quote Professor Carr, "becomes markedly inferior in interest."

5. In various parts of the diary there is talk of the Soviet ambassador to Japan, Viktor Kopp, of a quarrel about moral derelictions, and the need to recall Kopp. This is a reworking of Bessedovsky, pages 131-35. But at this point, Litvinov's otherwise perfect memory for names fails him. Writes Litvinov: "To Tokyo has been appointed a quite young worker from the Ukraine, a member of the Ukrainian Central Executive. What a strange idea to send as a diplomat to Japan a Ukrainian." I looked up the name of the Ukrainian. It was—Gregory Bessedovsky!

6. The diary is unusually tireless in its repeating of first name and patronymic every time a personage is mentioned. With Jews the diarist observes a special procedure which is totally un-Russian, setting down only their patronymics without their first names: thus Lev Davidovich Trotsky is called Davidovich, and Adolf Abramovich Yoffee is called Abramovich. Unlike other diarists, Litvinov does not resort to initials even on the tenth mention of a name, but on page 68, there is another singular failure to give a name at all: "The new *chargé d'affaires* to Paris received instructions directly from Koba. That is monstrous. . . ." The name of the *chargé d'affaires* turns out to be Bessedovsky! He tells his story of his direct interview with Koba-Stalin on pages 190-92 of his own book.

This coyness about the name of Bessedovsky seems to be contagious. In his interim report, Professor Carr wrote to André Deutsch, "I have had two long meetings with Bessedovsky." But in his introduction to the book, Professor Carr writes: "I visited Paris —in an attempt to obtain detailed and accurate information about the manuscript's

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provenance. According to statements made to me. . . ." The name of Bessedovsky has again disappeared! Since in the supposed chain of "provenance" whereby the manuscript of the diary reached the publisher's hand there are only three people whose real names are given, and since two of them, Litvinov and Kollontay, were dead, one would have expected Carr at least to put the reader on notice that a man named Bessedovsky had played the key role in the transmission of the manuscript, and in vouching for its authenticity. More particularly since Bessedovsky had been the agent for another dubious manuscript, *My Uncle Joseph Stalin,* by Budu Svanidze, the foreword to whose American and British editions was written by him. In that foreword Bessedovsky vouched for the identity of Budu Svanidze and the authenticity of his book, but Boris Souvarine was able to show that Budu Svanidze had never existed.*

To make matters still worse, Professor Carr a few pages later (page 14) actually uses the Russian edition of Bessedovsky's own memoirs, from which I have been quoting, to demonstrate the truthfulness of a dubious passage in the diaries! Professor Carr has been less than candid with his readers—to put it mildly—in concealing the chief name in the chain of "provenance" of the supposed Litvinov diary, but when he uses Bessedovsky's *Na Putyakh k Termidory* to silence doubts that may be aroused in the reader's mind by a passage it contains on Benes, I prefer not to try to qualify his procedure.

If in every line of the *Journal* there are things which the real Litvinov could not have thought or said, on every page there are absurdities and tokens of an ignorance which a man so highly placed as he could not have been guilty of. Professor Carr cites a few of these boners to suggest that "at least two hands" composed the diary, but he by no means cites the most ridiculous and impossible of them. Here we shall have to content ourselves with a random sampling.

There is Zoya Mossina, to whom more space is devoted than to Roosevelt, Bullitt, Hull, Welles, Herriot, Blum, and all the other statesmen Litvinov knew, put together. A character straight out of a scandal sheet, she is represented as the secretary of the Communist cell in the Soviet Commissariat of Foreign Relations. On page 44 she has the cell compel Litvinov to give classes in English to the members of the Foreign Office. On page 46-47, Yagoda, the dread acting head of the secret police, orders the hairdresser's shop in the Foreign Commissariat to close because people talk too much in barber chairs, and there may be leaks. Mossina gets Stalin to overrule Yagoda to protect "socialist competition among the hairdressers." On pages 152 ff. Zoya is running for re-election. There is a real campaign, balloting, stuffed ballot boxes, etc., etc. Placards on the wall accuse Zoya of "encouraging abortions." The Politburo tries to defeat her, but she gets re-elected anyhow. Molotov intervenes, and finally Stalin, who sends Zoya off to a concentration camp. Stalin's wife, Alliluyeva, who, it is suggested on pages 169-70, seems to be having a Lesbian affair with Zoya, tries to get her out, and failing, commits suicide.

This is a fair picture of the level of most of the inside historical information in the diary. Kalinin impresses Ambassador Davies with his homespun quality (". . . he was priceless . . . he even picked his nose to show his peasant origins"). A foreign ambassador is seduced by ballerinas who are Cheka operatives and "Yezhov [chief of the secret police] listens in himself (through a bedroom microphone)—the ambassador yelps like a rabbit when he enjoys himself with our ballerinas. . . . so far the only case of collaboration of the NKVD and the capitalist world. . . ." Top party leaders who are about to be "confessed" and purged are brought to Yezhov's office with their wives, who are undressed and when naked are threatened with rape by Yezhov's special agent for raping, an ugly, hunchbacked, and syphilitic giant. They are softened by a sample raping, in the presence of Yezhov and his victims, of the eighteen-year-old daughter of one of the arrested party leaders. Bubnov has his son baptized, and Kaganovich has his circumcised. Litvinov was always opposed to the split between Bolsheviks and Social Democrats and there would have been world socialist unity had it not been

*See *Bulletin de l'Association d'Etudes et d'Informations Politiques Internationales,* May 1953, Nos. 88 and 89.

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for the "fanaticism of his [Lenin's] crazy scrap with Adler, Kautsky, Renner, Renaudel." (This "scrap," as both the author of the diary and the historian who introduces it could have ascertained, was about the proper socialist attitude toward World War I and Litvinov himself wrote letters and reports boasting of his role in bringing about the split at a wartime conference he attended as Lenin's emissary.)

The most deplorable feature of this compendium of trivia, absurdity, and salacious backstairs gossip is that it is solemnly provided with all the externals of scholarship: an introduction by a historian of repute, appendices, a bibliography of Litvinov's works, and innumerable footnotes. Typical of the use of these last is the following passage from the body of the text:

"Koba has a new passion: the sister. . . . There are rumors about young . . . [who shares this new passion's sexual favors with Koba]. If Koba found out there would be a tragedy. He is temperamentally unable to share anything. . . . Budyenny was simply a drunken n.c.o. when he killed his wife. . . . Koba is different. . . . If Alliluyeva keeps up her scenes in public he may. . . ."

Here a footnote *re* Budyenny is appended: "Budyenny, Semen Mikhailovich, Marshal, leading Soviet cavalry expert, Commissar for Defence in 1940."

Again we learn that "Koba's liaison with the actress was broken off after he had been told of her amorous adventures in Tiflis with Kinkhadze." To which a footnote is appended: "Kinkhadze. Chief of Georgian heavy industry, then Foreign Minister of Georgia." When Litvinov is rusticated, he describes his wooden house as having a cock on the roof, to which is appended the footnote: "Cock on the Roof. Common form of decoration on peasant houses in Russia. Originates from an old superstition that the cock chases away evil spirits." Such are the uses of scholarship.

THERE are three questions of real importance touched on in the diary: the purges of the 1930's, the Chinese Revolution, and the secret relations the Red Army had with the Reichswehr before Hitler.

About the purges Litvinov knows nothing. He hears gossip from third parties, gets the dates of trials and executions wrong, worries about the Jews among the victims, and the possible rape of his daughter by the NKVD's rape specialist. His diary tells us much less than any hitherto published account, and what it does tell is trivial and poverty-stricken invention.

On the Reichswehr, about which Litvinov could have told much that is still secret, we get an absurd debate with himself as to whether to "withdraw" General Freiherr Kurt von Hammerstein from active service in Germany because "we need a military adviser in Mongolia. We will pay him in Tsarist style even though we are Bolsheviks. We will satisfy the imperial Reichsofficer." Actually, at that moment Hammerstein was nothing less than Chief of Staff of the Third Command of the German Army. A little later he was made Deputy Chief of Staff of the entire Reichswehr. Even if he were a secret agent, is it likely that Russia would have withdrawn him from *that* key position? And even if he were paid "in Tsarist style," it is hard to picture Hammerstein giving up such a post to go to Mongolia.

On the Chinese Revolution, all the dates are wrong, often by several years. All the Chinese leaders in the public eye today are made top men back in 1926-7 when in actual fact they were mere underlings; and everything is drowned in the usual brew of silly gossip. I have documented this elsewhere* and will limit myself here to one major bit of "inside" misinformation.

As the diary opens, on "the third Saturday in May" of 1926 (one of the few exact dates given in the entire book), the Russians are conferring in Moscow with Mao Tse-tung, Chu Teh, and Li Ta-chao on how "to get rid of Chiang Kai-shek either physically or politically." Here we have a whole crowded nest of anachronisms. Mao Tse-tung, though already a second-string Communist, was still a minor Kuomintang official in Yunnan; his association with Chu Teh was still several years away; all three of them were outranked by many Chinese Communist leaders later to be purged; we know the real names of the Chinese leaders who were in Moscow for consultation in 1926. Chu Teh was there, but Mao was not. More important, Chiang Kai-shek was

*The *New Leader* (New York), August 1, 1955.

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then Moscow-backed, and the hope of all the Russian Communist leaders. His armies did not yet control all China, but held only one province out of eighteen. The chief Soviet concern was to back him to the limit in order to enable him to begin what was to become his famous sweep to the north. Litvinov pictures Stalin as wanting to destroy Chiang at that time, although he controlled only one out of China's eighteen provinces, because Stalin had to assume a "false revolutionary pose" under the pressure of "attacks by Radek and Trotsky."

Actually, we have two speeches on the "Chinese question" by Stalin in 1926, and they contain no hint of his future "revolutionary pose." He rebukes a young disciple named Mif, not an oppositionist, for proposing Soviets for the Chinese peasants, and he calls for "support of the Canton Army, inspired by an idea, the idea of the struggle against imperialism, heartened by the passion which will bring about the emancipation of China" and overwhelm "the counter-revolutionary Northern armies." Finally, there was no disagreement or opposition criticism for another year on this score, so that in 1927 Stalin could remind his critics that "you too supported and were in full agreement with this tactic and your criticism is an afterthought."

PROFESSOR CARR tells us that if this diary is a forgery, its "motive is commercial, not political . . . the author appears as in many respects ambivalent in his judgments, and in particular in his attitude to Stalin. This gives the document, whether genuine or not, a certain value for the historian."

The first purpose of the forgery mill for "inside" books on Russia that has its headquarters in France and branches in England, Germany, the United States, and perhaps other countries, is undoubtedly to make money. When we total up the number of first serializations, and publications in France, England, Germany, more rarely in the United States, Italy, and Latin America, and the substantial sums paid by American magazines for options which, after investigation, they generally do not exercise, I am convinced that the industry is profitable. But I fail to comprehend why a forgery is any more valuable to the historian because its motive is profit, and its forged passages, whether through laziness or design, are "ambivalent."

Actually, the forgeries have a political function too, though that is harder to pin down. On the surface, all these "revelations" designed to fill the vacuum left by Soviet secrecy appear to be anti-Soviet. They are that in a vulgar, prurient, scandal-sheet fashion: full of orgies, lechery, deeds of sadistic cruelty, international Jewish conspiracies, and evidence that the Soviet leadership need not be taken seriously. But virtually all this material, and the Litvinov "diary" no less than the other items, serves a directly opposite aim when it comes to certain large issues. The real cruelties and orgies always concern subordinates, particularly those already dead, whereas, despite a certain capriciousness, Stalin turns out to be a tower of strength, a man of foresight, a good father, a good Georgian, husband, or uncle, a simple lover of Georgian foods, wines, songs, a man who knows the masses as no other Soviet leader, and the posssessor of various other average citizen's qualities which tend to normalize and humanize the total state and its late dictator. All the great black mysteries of his life are cleared up. Rudzutak is purged for moral reasons; Stalin does not know just whom Yezhov is to arrest next and even Stalin has to give in to him; Stalin shows concern for Piatakov in his illness and sends him honey, so that if Piatakov was purged there must have been good reason; Benes really deserved his fate at the time of the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia, since he himself wrote a letter, "unfortunately proved genuine," which showed that he was "anti-Soviet," for in it he "claimed that he could bring about a coup d'état in Moscow"; the Soviet generals really did plot to betray Russia to Hitler, and it is suggested that their purge, which Litvinov places in the wrong year, headed off a military coup; Rosengoltz confesses to Litvinov his own, Smilga's, and Piatakov's guilt; the Stalin-Hitler pact is justified in a half dozen separate places, although the "ambivalent" Litvinov was dead against it; in fact his "ambivalence" always ends with his testifying that Stalin was much wiser than he; in short, "this man has nerves of steel . . . is what our country and our age need . . . is a cynic but his knowledge of the masses is undeniable . . . is wiser than

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us all . . . slept under the same roof with the people whom Ilyich idealized . . . knows what is good for them . . . and for Russia."

IT WILL be instructive to watch what the apocryphal-revelations industry in Paris will make of Khrushchev's downgrading of Stalin, which calls into question the justice of his purges, the correctness of the Stalin-Hitler pact, and the other strokes of Stalin's genius. The first fruits would appear to be a story in a Paris newspaper, *France-Soir*, on June 11 of this year, telling of a "still more secret speech" of Khrushchev's than the one already known. Datelined Vienna, "but almost certainly from another source . . . its authenticity cannot be questioned although it was completely unknown until today." It deals characteristically with Stalin's "veritable erotomania" in his last years: Beria picked girls for him "of more and more tender years," and Stalin, after shooting his wife, strangled her. The final section of this second super-secret report is occupied with a "new analysis of the foreign and domestic policies" adopted by Stalin's heirs, but otherwise *France-Soir* gives no details on the non-erotic section of Khrushchev's second report. For the moment, politics is out.

The third, and to my way of thinking, most important role played by this species of literature, at least in France, where it is a booming business, is that by a sort of literary and historical Gresham's Law, these spicy, disjointed, bemusing concoctions tend to drive out of circulation truly serious studies on the nature of the Soviet system. Statesmen who will not labor to master Stalin's "Mein Kampf" any more than they did Hitler's, take Litvinov's "diaries" on their airplane journeys to conferences with the Russians and recommend them to subordinates as a means of understanding the real nature of the Soviet system. This sort of thing is easier to write than serious Soviet studies—and easier to read. Professor Carr finds the present volume "the most sensational of its kind yet published." He feels that it "makes a useful contribution to our understanding of the conditions in which Soviet policy was framed and conducted in these years and of the attitude of those concerned." The answer to this is best put in the words of the historian who reviewed the book for the *Times Literary Supplement* of September 9, 1955: "This book adds to our understanding of Soviet affairs and of Litvinov's personality about as much as a forged banknote adds to our wealth."

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THE STUDY OF MAN

ON THE ECONOMICS OF F.D.R.

What a President Ought to Know

J. K. GALBRAITH

A YOUNG Columbia University scholar, Mr. Daniel R. Fusfeld, who is now on the faculty of Hofstra College, has just completed a careful investigation of the economic ideas to which Franklin D. Roosevelt was exposed in school and college and in the years prior to his becoming President—*The Economic Thought of Franklin D. Roosevelt*. Historians, the author regretfully points out, are taking a very poor view of F.D.R.'s economic knowledge. They tend to conclude, as a result, that his economic program was based on extensive improvisation or even downright opportunism. Evidence to support the point has come not only from Roosevelt's enemies, who have jubilantly proven that he knew less than nothing about anything, but also from his friends. Frances Perkins, for example, has said that Roosevelt did not read much in economics, and she has also told of the reciprocal bewilderment which afflicted the principals after the famous meeting between J. M. (later Lord) Keynes and Roosevelt in 1934. Keynes was distressed that Roosevelt was not "more literate, economically speaking," while Roosevelt hazarded the puzzled guess that Keynes "must be a mathematician rather than a political economist."

Mr. Fusfeld comes strongly to the defense of Roosevelt's economic education and his knowledge of economics. (He notes that a lot of professional economists were baffled by Keynes in the 30's.) Except on the matter of what to do about depressions—a rather critical weakness but a common one in those days—Roosevelt's "views on basic economic matters were well-articulated." His general economic philosophy led quite directly to his political program. Building on the much discussed *noblesse oblige* which is now supposed to be part of the Roosevelt, and I gather also the Hudson Valley, tradition, F.D.R. had a sound general education including a liberal training in economics at Harvard. Mr. Fusfeld attributes a good deal to the influence of Professor W. Z. Ripley.

Ripley was the great authority of his time on corporations and railroads and he had the most exact and extensive knowledge of high corporate skullduggery of any man of his generation. It is easy, in the light of F.D.R.'s later attitudes, to suppose that he was influenced by Ripley, always assuming that he went to classes as he should. Roosevelt had a further education in Wilsonian liberalism, and more specifically in labor relations, while Assistant Secretary of the Navy in World War I. All of this came before the opportunity to read and reflect which was a by-product of his attack of polio, and to which biographers have always attached much significance. Mr. Fusfeld thinks they have greatly exaggerated its importance. Finally, there was the rich experience in the farm, welfare, conservation, and power problems of the state of New York, and the knowledge that came from the peculiarly talented group of people on which, as governor, Roosevelt drew. Roosevelt went to Washington,

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J. K. GALBRAITH, who here reviews Daniel R. Fusfeld's *The Economic Thought of Franklin D. Roosevelt* (Columbia University Press, 337 pp., $5.00) is professor of economics at Harvard and the author of several books, among them *American Capitalism* (1952) and *The Great Crash* (1955). His last appearance in COMMENTARY was with "Eisenhower and the Conservative Revolution," in August 1953.

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in Mr. Fusfeld's view, with a very good working knowledge of economics indeed.

IT SEEMS to me that Mr. Fusfeld has made his case about as well as anyone could. He is an economist and has known what to look for, and he has researched his material competently and well. Yet I find myself unpersuaded and so, I think, will quite a number of readers. There is a closely related and even more interesting question, which is how much knowledge of economics a man must have to be a good President.

Mr. Fusfeld does not say what he means by a "well-articulated" approach to economic problems, but I assume, at a minimum, it means that the individual has a set of controlling ideas which he brings to bear on the specific facts of any situation. Given the facts, his reactions then will be tolerably certain and predictable. We like people who are so supplied with a basic working theory: it enables us to type them as conservative, liberal, Keynesian, Marxian, or whatever, and this is convenient and comforting. It enables us also to make further in-grade distinctions—as between sound and extreme Keynesians, ordinary and rabid conservatives, good liberals and poor liberals—except that now, I believe, almost any liberal is likely to be called a confused liberal. In politics these categories also give us some feeling of certainty as to how a man will react after he has been elected. If a man has well-developed economic ideas, even though they may be unpalatable, we pay him the compliment of saying that we know where he stands.

Yet some doubts about the value of such well-formed views begin to emerge when we think back to the 1932 election. No one, and incidentally not Mr. Fusfeld, would go so far as to suggest that Roosevelt's economic views were nearly as well articulated as Mr. Hoover's. Mr. Hoover knew where he stood, and the American people knew where he stood. He believed that the responsibility for the well-being of the American people rested not with the Federal government, but with the people themselves or with their local governments. He was not at all impressed by the argument that modern capitalism, especially the rise of large corporate units, had removed from the people (and also from local and state governments) the power to work out their salvation at home. If the Federal government would balance the budget, strongly affirm its intentions to remain on the gold standard, keep the bureaucrats on leash, and leave private enterprise to its own resources, things would get better. There might be suffering, but there would be less than under any other arrangement. Mr. Hoover had said all of these things with clarity and sincerity. There was no similar blueprint of Roosevelt's views; even today nothing could be said about them within similar compass.

Yet Mr. Hoover's economic policy has not had a great deal more sympathy from the historians than it had from the contemporary voters. In fact, it stands, like Wilson's League of Nations, as one of the flat failures of the century and without the redeeming quality of seeming to have been a good try. The economic policy of Roosevelt was not a prompt, immediate, and widespread success. But its reputation as a vast step forward is completely secure.

SOMEONE before now will have wanted to plead that there are economic systems and economic systems, and that Mr. Hoover's, however well-developed, was singularly ill-adapted both to the temper and economic situation of 1932. That it was ill-adapted can be agreed, but the availability of alternative systems is less than clear. In 1932 respectable economic opinion was all on Mr. Hoover's side. The cranks, crackpots, eccentrics, and the vaguely irresponsible talked about cutting loose from gold, having a big bond issue to alleviate unemployment, of the need for some kind of national planning, or of the possible virtues of something like the Domestic Allotment Plan for agriculture. These were not the ideas of the men of established reputation. Had Roosevelt affiliated himself too obviously with the cranks in 1932, his contemporary reputation as a man of economic sense would have suffered. (Many looked askance at his flirtation with the monetary ideas of Professor George F. Warren of Cornell.) On the other hand, if Roosevelt had mastered and accepted the ideas of the men of established reputation, his views would not have been different from those of Mr. Hoover.

It has always been my feeling that Roosevelt would have been much happier had he been able just once to balance the Federal budget. While the Keynesian thesis that the times called for a deficit was almost incredibly convenient, it is my hunch that he regarded

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it as another of the rationalizations which his advisers, in the tradition of their master, were exceptionally skilled at providing. The belief in the balanced budget, if it existed, was the residue of some past exposure to economics. Had the latter been more extensive and penetrating it would also have left a deeper feeling for the gold standard, a dislike for monkeying with the price system, a suspicion of the monopolistic potentialities of unions, and any number of taboos of which, in fact, F.D.R. was blessedly free.

In May of 1932, in a speech at Oglethorpe University in Georgia which is quoted by Mr. Fusfeld, Roosevelt said: "The country needs and, unless I mistake its temper, the country demands, bold, persistent experimentation. It is common sense to take a method and try it: if it fails, admit it frankly and try another. But above all, try something." (Roosevelt subsequently adhered to the first rule of politics, which is never to concede an error. Your opponents are never gracious about such concessions. On the contrary, they hasten to point out that you have even admitted yourself that it was all wrong.) This was the voice of unabashed empiricism. It denied the existence of a controlling view of events. But in the context of 1932 it was greatly to be preferred to a systematic economic doctrine. Such a doctrine was certain to be wrong.

ECONOMICS is in a far better way now than it was in the early 30's. In the latter part of that decade, under the combined stimulus of the depression, Keynes's *General Theory*, and the new system of social accounts (which gave us the now familiar Gross National Product, National Income, and their components, and enabled us for the first time to have a sense of total economic performance), economics had a great renaissance and this carried on through the war years. Of late there has been a recurrence of the relative stagnation of economic thought which is endemic in times of opulence, but it is unlikely that it has yet carried the subject to the extremes of irrelevance that characterized the late 20's and early 30's. One can more safely set store by economic knowledge now than then. I still doubt if a President or any high administrator should be controlled, as was Mr. Hoover, by too many fixed views. There must still be a general and pragmatic willingness to adapt to circumstances.

Proof of the point lies in the number of recent economic and political errors which can be traced to efforts to adhere to seemingly impeccable principle when the circumstances suggested a different course. In 1946 the Anglo-American Financial Agreement of that year, which provided the postwar loan of $3.75 billions to Britain, specified that Britain would make sterling convertible into dollars on current account in accordance with a time-table laid down in the agreement. The fact of a serious and perhaps not too readily curable lopsidedness in Britain's balance of payments was clear, but it was passed over. The great and nostalgic principle of convertibility was sacrosanct. It must control at all cost. In the end, convertibility was proclaimed on schedule. The proceeds of the loan were dissipated in a windfall gain to alert holders of sterling in a few weeks' time, and then sterling became inconvertible again. It was one of the most fantastically expensive episodes in recent history.

The Eisenhower administration made its most foolish economic blunder in 1953 under the influence of the theory, which had attained the standing of a cliché in financial quarters, that the New and Fair Deals had gone much too far in depressing interest rates. A series of abrupt increases in early 1953, for which there was no circumstantial justification, had a decidedly unsettling effect on business. The policy had to be abandoned and reversed. It was the deathless principle that TVA is creeping socialism, and that private utilities should produce all possible power regardless of circumstances, that led to the recent fiasco of Dixon-Yates.

NONE of this argues either that economic theory is unuseful or that a President should be without convictions on economic matters. We know a good deal about economic behavior, and most of it is the result of the effort to develop applicable generalizations. The trouble is that the generalizations are not in themselves a complete guide to action. They must be tested against the circumstances of the particular situation. Perhaps there were times—had he been President in 1920-21, for example—when Mr. Hoover's belief in the self-corrective character of depressions and the wisdom of a hands-off policy would have been, if not ideal, at least possible. But a generalization that was appropriate for mild depressions

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was intolerable for a grave one. Only by an open-minded testing of the theory against the new facts could grave error be avoided. But here is the rub. It can probably be put down as a rule that acceptance of an economic position and an open-minded testing of its applicability are incompatible. The choice, under these circumstances, had better lie with open-mindedness.

This, as I have suggested, does not argue against conviction. There is still need for a definite attitude on economic problems. On this more general level we know that Roosevelt reacted favorably to economic change. He also regarded the government as a natural instrument for effecting change. He saw no special virtue in big business and did not regard successful businessmen as a special repository of skill or knowledge. He was not a Jeffersonian, although he was pleased to regard himself as one, but he was certainly not a Hamiltonian. He regarded the country in its physical aspect as a kind of estate to be improved, beautified, and conserved for those who would possess it later. None of these attitudes implies of itself deep and precise economic knowledge. It did, however, make his reaction to particular circumstances broadly predictable.

Thus, faced with, say, the agricultural depression, it was inevitable that Roosevelt would be disposed to positive government action, quite apart from the political pressures of the case. He would not suppose that the head of International Harvester or of Swift and Company was the man to call on for help. On the other hand, he would not be clear about what to do himself. He would be open to advice and suggestions.

At times, in defending F.D.R.'s economics, it seems to me that Mr. Fusfeld himself is really defending his general attitude toward economic problems. It is this, and not specific positions, that seems to me important. To cite another recent example, Mrs. Hobby did not get into her terrible troubles with the Salk vaccine as the result of inadequate medical knowledge. Her difficulty was an attitude toward her department which kept her from seeing, much less welcoming, an opportunity to put it fully at the service of the people.

As with medicine so with economics. There will always be a doctor in the house.

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Communist Teachers

To the Editor of Commentary:

Two arguments (amid much hysteria) appearing in Paul R. Hays's critique of the AAUP report on academic freedom ("Academic Freedom and Communist Teachers," June) deserve comment. The first is that all Communists are committed to revolution and that hence they should be barred from teaching positions. This argument is an inferential one, not an empirical one. Hays presents no data regarding the number of Communist teachers in our school systems, no data on the proportion of them convicted on charges of espionage and sabotage (or even perjury). He ignores even the frequent citation in the AAUP report of dismissed professors whose competence and loyalty were unquestioned and whose sole "offense" was their refusal to answer questions about Communist affiliation.

The argument neglects the factor of flexibility (or if you prefer, inconsistency) in human behavior. It could be used just as well to bar Christian Scientists from teaching physics since they are committed to the doctrine of the unreality of matter, Catholics from teaching modern scientific psychology since they are committed to the doctrine of the existence of a soul, Christians from serving as ROTC instructors since they are committed to the doctrine of non-retaliation for injury suffered, or Jews from the FBI since they are committed to the Biblical injunction "Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people."

His second argument is analogical. Just as we do not invite homosexuals to teach homosexuality or Egyptians to teach Egyptology, and just as we did not invite Nazis to teach Nazism, so we should not invite (or permit) Communists to teach Communism. (I trust that I may dismiss the reference to Egyptology as rhetoric since it would require us to exhume the bones of the ancient Egyptians.)

As for the homosexuals, I should judge that members of a class in abnormal psychology could understand homosexuality much better if they had opportunity to see and talk with a homosexual in person than if they merely read about him in a book. The researchers, of course, had that opportunity. Why not the students?

As for the Nazis, in the 30's a professor of German at our college visited Hitler's Germany and returned enthusiastic about what he saw. Though we were unhappy over his "conversion," no attempts were made, as far as I can recall, to "purge" him, to force him to answer whether he was or had ever been a member of the German-American Bund, or to require him to take special oaths of nondisloyalty. I trust that it is not necessary to remind any socially conscious person of the Lindberghs and the General Woods who up to the very day that the bombs fell on Pearl Harbor were marching up and down the land urging Americans to join the "wave of the future."

In a sense, we teachers "invite" fascists, Communists, atheists, psychotics, and deviants of all types into our classes constantly—through the medium of their writings. Our students are "addressed" by Marx and Herbert Hoover, John Dewey and Plato, Rousseau and Gandhi. Censorship of the teacher implies censorship of teaching—of the textbook and the curriculum. What happens to academic freedom and the life of scholarship then?

What amazes me most about Hays's essay is his disregard of the fact that virtually none of the dismissed professors referred to in the AAUP report were established to be Communists. Since 1949, my tabulation shows, 18 collegiate institutions have dismissed 78 teachers. Only three of these were clearly established to be Communists. (I do not consider refusal to answer a question about Communist party membership clear evidence of such membership.) The remainder refused to answer questions or take oaths, were active in the Progressive party, defended Soviet science against charges of political control, contributed to the Spanish loyalists, signed a petition for amnesty to eleven national leaders of the Communist party convicted under the Smith Act, failed to show "proper loyalty" to their university, or were "Communist in spirit."

These facts seem to me to indicate that the issue is not subversion, but conformity. For this reason these cases impress me, along with other members of the AAUP, as constituting serious threats to academic freedom.

Harry Ruja

San Diego, California

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To the Editor of Commentary:

Paul R. Hays decries the "emotive words" used by the American Association of University Professors in its report on academic freedom. In rebuttal, Mr. Hays himself refers to "the priggishness of this academic aloofness" on the part of "professors so steamed up that they have forsaken logic and common sense" in their "muddled, slogan-ridden thinking," "specious reasoning and resort to catchwords."

In place of an emotional polemic, Commentary and Mr. Hays might have better presented a balanced discussion of the complex issues involved in maintaining a strong tradition of academic freedom without at the same time abdicating to rigid dogmatists and false messiahs.

For example, Mr. Hays concludes his article in a sympathetic frame of mind for the position that we should exclude all teachers whose " 'commitments or obligations to any organization, Communist or other, prejudice impartial scholarship and the free pursuit of truth. . . .' " An admirable sentiment, of course, but what does it mean? Do we exclude Catholics, Orthodox Jews, Marxists, trade-union leaders, psychoanalysts, Dodger fans. . . ? Ultimately, whom shall we not exclude?

Mr. Hays has done a great disservice to the position he advocates no less than to those who argue that teachers should be fired only for "gross misconduct" by his failure to define the issues.

Israel W. Charny

Rochester, New York

Mr. Hays *writes:*

If my article had been intended to present the arguments against permitting Communists to teach, it would have had to deal with the points Mr. Ruja and Mr. Charny make. Since I intended a criticism only of the case made by the AAUP Report, I found it necessary only to refer to the arguments which have been offered by such professors as Hook, Counts, and Childs, and which the report ignored. The pummeling I have received at the hands of Mr. Ruja and Mr. Charny is therefore as irrelevant as if they had criticized my comments on McCarthy on the ground that I had failed to make out a case for Communism.

Jewish Survival

To the Editor of Commentary:

In his articles on the "Future of American Jewry" (May and June) Herbert J. Gans predicts the end of Jewish culture, the almost complete extinction of the Jewish community in the United States within the lifetime of another generation. What four thousand years could not do, a score or two more years will accomplish—in this free country of ours. Is a free society detrimental to ethnic identities? History does not warrant our saying so. . . . Freedom of movement and expression inevitably brings to fruition the best characteristics of a given ethnic group.

The fact that the present culture of the great majority of American Jews is so much different from the "traditional" one of the past only substantiates the above. . . . The "traditional" culture of the Jews never had a secular character. From the dawn of his history the mode of life of the Jew in all its details has been prescribed to him in the name of God. From cradle to grave, in all his waking hours, the Jew was busy fulfilling the ordained 613 commandments, the *taryag mitzvot.* Today this kind of Judaism is just about gone. The dynamic force of the Jewish people will, in the future, just as in the past, adapt itself to the best that the time and the surroundings have to offer. . . .

In adopting a higher secular culture the Jew does not cease to be a Jew. . . . It is true that at present our American Jewry is at the crossroads, or rather at the inroads, of the American way of life as against the still persisting past. And, naturally, the old religious leaders are up in arms. They beat the drums of fear, lest the Jews as a group go under. Again, some of the old intellectuals (the *Yiddishisten*) maintain that the Jews can survive as a distinct body only by and through the use of the Yiddish language. . . . I visualize a strong and healthy community of Jews in the United States, a community loyal to their country and proud of . . . their historical heritage, whatever the role the *shul* or Temple may play in the future.

According to Mr. Gans's classification, I am one of the first generation of immigrants to this country. And when I am confronted with our present-day Jewish youth (the third generation) . . . I see a healthy specimen, loyal and proud of his ancestry, conscious of the great humanitarian service rendered by his people in propounding the idea of monotheism and its moral precepts. . . . My humble opinion is that we should stop wasting time and resources in trying to revive the dying past. We should combine all our efforts to educate our younger generation to the old idea of carrying on our great prophetic mission of peace and brotherhood among the peoples of the world.

Samuel Freidin

Los Angeles, California

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Two Views of Thaddeus Stevens

To the Editor of Commentary:

I have read with great interest Professor T. Harry Williams's article, "Thaddeus Stevens: An American Radical," in the June issue of your publication. I could not help noticing that it was in the main a commentary on my biography of Stevens, *Thaddeus Stevens: A Being Darkly Wise and Rudely Great.*

Professor Williams has written: "Without going into detail, it may be said that the Reconstruction policies of Stevens and Johnson embodied the differences between, to use modern terms, a hard peace and a soft peace." This is not stating the problem fairly. The principal differences between Stevens's and Johnson's Reconstruction policies were the following: Johnson was in favor of a peace that would have made *three* votes cast in the former rebel states equivalent to *five* votes cast in the loyal states, in elections for the House of Representatives and the Electoral College. Stevens opposed this. Stevens was in favor of equality before the law for Negroes and whites. Johnson opposed this.

Two-fifths of the population of the South was composed of Negroes, none of whom, either under Johnson's or under Stevens's plan, would have been given the right of suffrage. Before the war three-fifths of the slaves were counted in the basis of representation in national elections. Now that slavery was supposedly abolished, *all* would have been counted under Johnson's plan, increasing the South's representation in the House and the Electoral College by about 20 per cent. This increased representation would have enabled the South, with the aid of its allies, the Copperheads of the North, to gain control of the Federal government at the next Presidential election. A study of the election returns of 1868 leaves no doubt about this. As victors are not in the habit of surrendering to the vanquished, this would almost certainly have resulted in an uprising in the North. It was Johnson, not Stevens, who proposed a "hard" peace—hard on the North and on the freedmen, for whom special codes were made which Johnson's own generals characterized as a renewal of slavery.

Stevens proposed that representation in the House and the Electoral College be based not upon the number of *inhabitants*, but the number of *voters* in each state. This would still have made a vote cast by a former rebel equivalent to a vote cast by a man who had fought to save the Union, as far as representation in the House and the Electoral College was concerned. It would likewise have given the South an incentive to educate the freedmen and make voters out of them so as to increase its representation in the national government. With that end in view he proposed the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution. Realizing that the South would refuse to ratify the amendment, he proposed that it be submitted for ratification to the loyal states only, and that the former rebel states be placed under territorial government until they consented to subscribe to the amended Constitution. On April 30, 1866, he presented a bill to that effect. The Conservative Republicans, agreeing with Lincoln that the Southern states had never ceased to be members of the Union (a contention to which few constitutional lawyers would care to subscribe) rejected the bill. When, as he had predicted, the Southern states refused to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment, the only course left open to the Republicans was to dissolve the Southern state governments, confer the elective franchise upon the freedmen, and submit the amendment for ratification to the newly elected legislatures. Had Stevens's advice been taken it would have been unnecessary to force Negro suffrage prematurely upon the South.

I must call Professor Williams's attention to two errors of fact which appear in his interesting article. Stevens did not begin his legal career at Lancaster but at Gettysburg. He was not defeated for Congress in 1852, but declined to be a candidate.

Ralph Korngold

Chicago, Illinois

Mr. Williams *writes:*

I have great respect for Mr. Korngold's sincerity of opinion and depth of feeling for human liberty. These characteristics have, however, led him to adopt several historical positions that are, in my opinion, extreme and untenable. I have no intention of entering upon a fruitless semantic controversy over the terms "hard" and "soft" peace. As to Mr. Korngold's analysis of the kind of Reconstruction that Stevens wanted and his claims for the merits of the Stevens plan, I have only to say that Mr. Korngold has a right to his opinion. He may be correct, but I do not see that in his book he proves his case by documentation. To repeat what I said in my article, I think that Mr. Korngold has written what is in some respects a valuable book—but he sees only one side of Reconstruction.

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Not One World

AMERICAN POLITICS IN A REVOLUTIONARY WORLD. By CHESTER BOWLES. Harvard University Press. 131 pp. $2.25.

Reviewed by IRVING KRISTOL

WE GROW old, but we can hardly believe it, and are always unprepared for the shock of self-recognition in those awful moments when we see ourselves under the harsh aspect of mutability. As with individuals, so with nations. Western Europe is, in this half of the century, undergoing just such a crisis, both in fact and in laggard consciousness. What it used to do easily and naturally, it finds it now cannot do at all. Thus, where once Britain and France could dominate North Africa and the Middle East with a few battalions, they must now muster all their strength in order to keep an ever more precarious toehold. It is not even, in this case, a matter of disproportionate numbers finally prevailing, for the combined population of England and France is still almost twice the *total* number of Arabs in the world. What is lacking is virility and self-confidence—the courage to dare and the will to sacrifice. The English may read with pride Churchill's history-saga of their world mission; and French pupils may still begin their studies with the premise that *Dieu est français*. But these are only the nostalgic reveries of middle age. And the fact that Western Europe has achieved the highest living standards in its history, that its current rate of economic progress compares favorably with any previous period in its history—these are but the comfortable circumstances of middle age, not signs of a new lease on life.

And America? America is a puzzle, for it is neither on European nor on any other known time. We Americans are accustomed to take it for granted that we are the embodied quintessence of life's prime. To our supposed elders we are anxiously sympathetic; to our reputed juniors we are cheerfully helpful. But somehow, it doesn't come off. Other people seem not to take us at our own estimate. Our worldly encounters frustrate instead of satisfying us; our vigor is misspent and yields no fruit; our expectations do not materialize. Every day the 20th century becomes less of an American century. Are we older than we think? Or younger?

Chester Bowles, our one-time ambassador to India, has first-hand knowledge of our national frustrations, and it is reassuring that he finds them to constitute nothing more serious than a passing case of immaturity. His new book, *American Politics in a Revolutionary World*, comprising the Godkin lectures he recently delivered at Harvard, sketches a theory of long-term political cycles in American history which is at the same time a theory of American development. It is a brief, urbane, and thoughtful volume. It is also a typically American book in that, having finished it, one is uncertain whether Mr. Bowles has diagnosed the crisis in America's foreign relations or merely provided us with yet another symptom of that crisis.

Basically, what Mr. Bowles has done is to follow the honorable 19th-century custom of transplanting the Whig interpretation of history—history as the unfolding story of liberty—from the English to the American scene. He divides American history since the founding of the Republic into three periods, each of them representing a new consensus about, and a new ordering of, the nation's political, social, and economic arrangements, and each being "higher" than the previous one in that the idea of liberty is expanded to encompass an ever greater portion of men's activities. The first cycle, from Jefferson to Lincoln, secured political democracy for the people and national sovereignty for the Federal government. The second, from Lincoln to F.D.R., extended Constitutional rights to the Negroes and set up the juridical and ideological framework within which private initiative was able to convert the United States into an industrialized, wealthy

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country. The third, from F.D.R. to Eisenhower, saw the establishment of the welfare state and the extension of the democratic ethic —and the "rights" that are a corollary of it—to economic and social problems. The fourth cycle, on which we are just entering with timid and faltering step, will have foreign policy as its central political issue, and the consensus which Mr. Bowles hopes to see victorious would involve the further extension of the dynamic of American liberty to govern our attitude toward the world outside.

Such an interpretation of American history is, of course, a myth. It does, however, have the advantage of being, not the offshoot of Mr. Bowles's private fancy, but rather a neat re-statement of *the* American myth—the myth America lives by, for better or worse. (Other nations have other myths, for better or worse.) His is the America of our textbooks and of our patriotic devotions; this is the image that, in young and tender imaginations, makes for a moral patriotism and a humble pride. And it is this idea-image, of a mystic and indissoluble partnership between the specific fortunes of America and the ineluctable march of Human Liberty, which is now undergoing a crucial confrontation with reality, in the form of America's confrontation with a world we had some part in making but which is, it seems, becoming every day more foreign.

As to the new consensus that would allow us to fulfill our "natural" role in world affairs, Mr. Bowles holds strong and elevating opinions on its nature:

"The most powerful ideas and principles in the history of man are closely linked with the evolution of American democracy. Today it is *our* revolution for self-determination, for human dignity, and for expanding economic opportunities which is alive and marching in Burma, India, and the Philippines, in Nigeria, the Sudan, and Tunisia, indeed throughout the non-communist world. If the leaders of America's fourth consensus but rediscover the mission of Jefferson, Lincoln, and Roosevelt, we will find that we are again in step with the world and confidently on the offensive."

Now, no one is likely to deny the fact that American foreign policy gravely lacks a set of working principles. But can these venerable clichés, no matter how earnestly declaimed, pass for such? Perhaps at one time they could. But not now. For the blunt and distasteful truth is that the world revolution of our time is *not* our revolution. We have not forfeited the leadership of this revolution for the good reason that we never possessed it. This revolution, so far from being ours, is frankly directed against the world hegemony of Western civilization, of which America is a part. The realities of this situation are obscured by the rhetoric of liberalism, which we have taught the rest of the world so well that they use it naturally to express even the most profoundly anti-liberal sentiments. Egypt's desire for "self-determination" is so great that nothing less than a sovereignty over North Africa will satisfy it; and it values human dignity so highly that it is closing down Christian schools lest they detract from it. And the yearning for "expanding economic opportunities" is so great in the new nations of Asia that they are all busy devising plans that neglect mere food and shelter in favor of steel mills and factories which can manufacture such essential articles as tanks, guns, and airplanes.

Mr. Bowles, alas, has his centuries confused. It was the 19th century that witnessed the kind of liberal revolutions he has in mind. The revolutions of the 20th century are of quite a different order; and if we fail to see this, we are easily confounded by the self-evident. Take, for instance, the anti-Americanism that is rampant in the new nations of Asia and Africa. Why do the Indians and the Indonesians and the Moroccans dislike us, despite our past friendliness toward their movements for independence? There has been an extraordinary amount of ingenious sociology and soul-searching devoted to this question, whose answer stares us candidly in the face. They dislike us because we are what we are, and they are what they are. They dislike us for belonging to the white race which has humiliated them; they dislike our power, which is greater than theirs; they dislike our wealth, which they do not think we merit; they dislike our individualism, which runs counter to their notions of a right social order; they dislike our hedonistic mass culture, which offends their moral sensibilities; they dislike our democratic system of government because of its instabilities and lack of permanent authority—they dislike us for our vices, and they dislike us for what we would regard as our virtues. There is nothing dark or mysterious about their feelings so long as one does not make the assumption that our values are theirs.

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One hopes that Mr. Bowles will not be too upset and discouraged to learn, as he soon doubtless will, that outside Europe (including much of Eastern Europe) there are few parts of the world that have any faith, or even any interest, in the missions of Jefferson, Lincoln, and Roosevelt. For too long now we have been hypnotized by the mirage of a world conflict between the principles of freedom and those of totalitarianism in which our role is the gratifying one of preacher and savior. There is such a conflict, but it is pretty much limited to Europe. So far as the nations in the rest of the world are concerned, the battle between Communism and Western liberalism is a distant and dubious one. On the whole, they are instinctively more sympathetic to Communism because it suits their non-liberal frame of mind; but their real sympathies are centered on themselves, and even when they are tempted by Communism this is a totally different temptation from that known to the West—they are attracted, not by its utopian-apocalyptic promise, but by its method of creating a powerful state in a poor country. And they want powerful states in order to work out their own national destinies as they understand them. The fundamental problem in South Asia is not whether India or Pakistan will "go Communist" or "choose freedom," but whether Hindu or Moslem is going to dominate the sub-continent. Just as the fundamental problem in the Middle East is whether pan-Arab nationalism is going to be successful in its intention of reducing Western Europe to a state of dependency by seizing control of its supplies of oil.

It is about time we recognized that not all the peoples and nations in the world want to be free and happy, as we in America understand those terms. What they clearly all do want is to be the makers and shakers of history—of their own history first of all, but ultimately of our history too. This is a perfectly natural ambition which we share with them, though our self-righteousness sometimes inclines us to forget it. And this new, complicated world power struggle is taking place at a moment when the centuries of Western expansion appear to be over and the epoch of Western contraction to have begun. Mr. Bowles is under the impression that his principles are vital and forward-looking. For a majority of the earth's population they are an irrelevant anachronism.

A new consensus about America's role in world affairs is as badly needed as Mr. Bowles asserts. But this consensus will have to be *new:* our familiar schoolboy notions of the American Heritage will not suffice. The world, *pace* Mr. Bowles, is not one grand community. It is not quite a jungle either; but we shall probably be the less disillusioned if we are ready, even if only intermittently, to regard it as such. We shall surely discover what all great powers sooner or later discover: that there are inescapable contradictions between the ideals by which we govern our relations among ourselves, and the realities of our relations with others. In the course of this discovery, our own liberal institutions and habits of mind will be subjected to a tension and strain that only a lucid self-consciousness will be able to resist. Democracy, heaven be praised, is *not* indivisible, any more than peace is; we need no perfect solutions to survive in an imperfect world.

But if, as Mr. Bowles would have us, we insist on seeing the world as created in our own image, such overreaching vanity will end up in an overwhelming despair. Our new consensus would then be some form of a new isolationism, a withdrawal to Fortress America where we would live off our own savings and provisions, leaving the rest of the world to its wilful self-profanation. We could then take what satisfaction was to be found in our being the youngest nation ever to qualify for an old-age pension.

Shuls, Synagogues, and Centers

Synagogue Architecture in the United States. By Rachel Wischnitzer. Jewish Publication Society. 204 pp. $6.00.

Reviewed by John Hollander

The flurry of architectural and quasi-sociological writing that has accompanied the present rush of construction all over the world is still more or less dominated by the doctrine of functionalism. Crudely stated, this doctrine declares that everything about what a building *looks like* should be something, or should depend on something, about its use. But no building is ever merely functional; on the contrary, we sometimes find elements in the design and construction whose effect is precisely to give to one kind of building the appearance of some other kind, mainly for the

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purpose of creating an attitude in the spectator. Architectural iconography of this nature is still prevalent even in the most modern buildings. Though today a bank, for example, no longer hides itself within the *palazzo* of a Florentine banking family in order to show the financial acumen of its directors, or, to display its zeal for public service, behind a Roman façade, it still tends to adopt self-assertive devices. "Flowing space," the dream of every prospective home-owner, guides the depositor past low counters where tellers, liberated from their cages, cash his checks by way of "modern, friendlier banking." Public structures, however much designed to facilitate the human activities carried on inside them, seem, as always, to symbolize in their appearance certain attitudes.

Evocative style still exists in domestic architecture as well, though perhaps to a lesser extent: "picture windows," originally developed to frame views of the Grand Tetons, now stare into each other in crowded Eastern suburbs. The implication is that each man is monarch of all he surveys of his narrow lot. But the general pervasiveness of the "ranch house" style involves fewer iconographical factors than did houses in the late 19th century, when Americans of means chose to suggest that their homes were their castles with many varieties of bizarre literality.

A functionalist might retort to this by pointing out that it is among the functions of a building to make such covert statements, to act as a kind of ideological semaphore. But of what types of buildings this is true, and to what degree, remains a problem. I have raised this question in connection with Rachel Wischnitzer's excellent history of American synagogue architecture because I feel that it provides a frame in which her book may be viewed as something more than merely a museum exhibit of Judeo-Americana.

Even as a family portrait album, however, the book gives us as generally revealing a series of images, and, by turns, as impressive, embarrassing, and nostalgic a one as we might expect. In the more than one hundred and fifty photographs, drawings, and engravings, we are carried from the restrained elegance of the Touro Synagogue in Newport (dedicated 1763) through the rather uneasy adaptations of ante-bellum Classic and Romanesque revivals; from the frantic quest for stylistic identity that exemplifies the post-Civil War trend of Orientalism, through the blatantly eclectic period ending with World War II; from the substantial gentility that housed large urban Conservative and Reform congregations to the final emergence of an avowed stylistic neutrality after World War II. Mrs. Wischnitzer, herself an architect, has provided a scholarly historical commentary, as well as brief descriptive notes for the plates. She is well aware throughout that any building erected at any time is the function of a great many variables, even though the appearance of the exterior may, in some epochs, dominate the others to the same extent that conceptions of utility are held to do so in our day. And she gives us an excellent account of the historical contingencies—diversified immigration, cultural backgrounds of new congregations, and changes in ritual—that made more immediate demands on interior arrangements of space and furniture.

But Mrs. Wischnitzer's study affords us more than the chance to leaf through its pages and find—as many readers will—some *shul* he has known well. For in the light of the purely architectural problems mentioned above, one can observe the developing ambiguity of the essential place of the synagogue in American life. Each solution of an architectural problem comes more and more to define the nature of the particular synagogue as an institution in itself. The pre-World War II eclecticism, for example, can be seen as a consequence of ceremonial faction and of the heterogeneous sociological makeup of congregations: a poor East European Orthodox congregation might take what it could get, and settle in a reconstructed brownstone house or school, while a wealthy Reform one might want some arbitrary version of genteel dignity. The recent boom in synagogue construction, however, is a reflection of the growing role of such ancillary institutions as the community center. Historically, the whole problem of iconography parallels that of the history of American architecture generally. But the struggle between "traditional motifs" and transient fashions in synagogue architecture is complicated by the fact that at no time since the Exile have there been any mandated images, any canonical emblems. Successive ages and differing groups in large part select their own criteria of Jewish "traditionality," with no appeal to authority. Thus the house of worship in America can

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formally suggest the timber *shul* of a *shtetl,* or an "old" Sephardic synagogue (a 15th-century Venetian building), an early medieval central-type structure, or the reconstruction of a Hellenistic one. Today, the peek-a-boo surprise of finding an Orthodox *shul* hidden inside what looks like a mélange of the cathedrals of various North Italian cities has been abandoned in favor of an architectural exterior that announces candidly what one may find inside it. But there still remain both room and desire for asserting the "Jewishness" or "synagogue-ness" of the building in some emblematic way.

It is only here, I think, that one wishes that Mrs. Wischnitzer had given us the benefit of some pure speculation. She intimates that the Ashkenazic congregation in Baltimore, by inscribing the *Magen David* into small circular windows flanking the Doric façade of its then (1845) fashionable synagogue building, was asserting its Jewishness. But (as she herself appears to realize) the *Magen David* itself is of doubtful antiquity as an emblem of Judaism, and its use in a building, so far from being traditionally Jewish, would seem to have been suggested by the use of the cross in a church. The fact that there are no canonical forms of unquestioned "traditionality" for labeling a building a synagogue remains obvious. But it is equally obvious that some of the best recent synagogues (notably those of Percival Goodman) manage—even without the support of their few decorative symbols—to look like nothing else but what they are. And they manage to do so for a great variety of reasons, ranging from the fact that the exterior arrangements reveal unambiguously synagogue-like interiors, to the very freedom from necessary formal elements that stems from the basic ambiguities and paradoxes of American Judaism itself.

It would be pointless here to quibble with Mrs. Wischnitzer's achievement. Thoroughness, however, bids me add that I looked vainly for *some* evaluation of the relative merits of the postwar buildings she describes (one or two seemed to me very poor in significant ways); and that she might have mentioned some of the sculptors like Herbert Ferber whose work is so fruitfully employed in several synagogues. But these, and the unfortunate but amusing slip that allowed "Hazzan," "Shammash," "Sephardim," and "Ashkenazim" to creep into her appended "Glossary of Architectural Terms," are trivial blemishes on the surface of a useful and provocative work.

Moral Fable

A DANCE IN THE SUN. By DAN JACOBSON. Harcourt, Brace. 209 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by ROBERT GORHAM DAVIS

MARXISTS used to speak of a law of unequal development in political economy which permitted backward countries to leap suddenly ahead, as Russia did, under the influence of ideas and techniques borrowed from more advanced countries. Dan Jacobson's sensitively written short novel about South Africa suggests that the same kind of thing can happen in fiction. *A Dance in the Sun* is one of the concentrated fables of individual moral responsibility which have been in vogue among younger writers in the United States since 1939. In America this vogue had certainly something to do with our historic and economic circumstances, with the reaction against Marxism and the social consciousness of the 30's, and with the political conservatism and centrism fostered in the last decade by a spreading economic prosperity. *A Dance in the Sun,* on the contrary, comes from and describes an explosive colonial situation of increasing inequality which might seem more appropriately described in such class-conflict, mass-movement fiction as *The Octopus, The Grapes of Wrath,* or *Germinal,* or at least in the broadly conceived social novel of the central English tradition.

Jacobson, however, though dealing with racial relations, chooses to put his emphasis on the problems of moral self-knowledge and ability to communicate with others which have interested the most gifted young writers of his generation in this country. *A Dance in the Sun,* told in the first person, is developed with great economy of means and great simplicity of narrative technique, and observes the classic unities. Two young hitch-hikers, university students on vacation, arrive toward evening at a run-down, pretentious house on the veld. The owners of the house, a strange middle-aged couple named Fletcher, are eager to have the youths stay with them as protection against some ill-defined threat. It has to do with the huge Kaffir, Joseph, who is lurking outside the grounds, and with the expected return that evening of the wife's younger brother.

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The action takes only twenty-four hours, and they are crowded ones. Except for the hot truck ride across the veld, bringing the hitch-hikers by chance to the Fletchers' tiny village, everything occurs inside or very near the Fletchers' house. Only six persons are directly involved, and two of them, the students, are such like-minded outsiders that they are really one. It is from their point of view that the story is told.

The emotional intensities are also those of classic drama—kinship feelings of a rather primitive kind. Mrs. Fletcher, very conscious of her Dutch family heritage and of her fallen estate, is passionately devoted to her wayward, taunting brother, but her feeling for him is not more obsessive than that of the Negro Joseph for his missing sister. She is gone, and so is her baby, about whom there is a traditional mystery of parentage. The emotional situations resolve themselves, partly in symbolic destructiveness, and partly in a victory by Joseph which is quite unanticipatable, and which gives the novel, for the distant reader, its distinctively South African and unassessable character.

For though the six persons of the action are all highly individualized, and though their vividly described behavior toward each other is very strange and arbitrary, what is ultimately in question is the treatment of the Negro Joseph and of his sister. Ultimately the whites come to stand for the differing attitudes they express toward what has been done to the Negroes, and yet they are so isolated, since there are no other characters of their kind to test them by, that it is hard to tell how representative they really are. Mr. Fletcher is blackly reactionary in words; he shouts that "all educated Kaffirs should be shot." But he is a strange, moody man, hard to place, and rather like Tom Buchanan of *The Great Gatsby* in the violence with which he expresses trite and unreasonable social ideas. "This energy went with an apparent indifference to what he was talking about."

The two students uneasily analyze their motives in entering into deceptive collusion with Joseph against Fletcher. Joseph's story of his search for his sister recalls all that they had heard from dark voices in their childhood of the typical lives and sufferings of the submerged mass of the people. Yet they recognize, even in their ambiguous attempts to help, how remote that experience is from their own, and how little in this instance they understand what really motivates Joseph and why he finally imposes on Fletcher the curious relationship which leaves Fletcher at the end of the book capering with frustration, "solitary in the veld, a grotesque little figure."

In what he wants and imposes is Joseph a typical Kaffir? And if he is so now, how long will men of his sort remain thus? We do not know, and the novel does not tell us. And yet since the drama which is enacted here is so specifically South African in its social and even moral circumstances, we have a right to ask.

A Dance in the Sun helps make us realize how dependent we are on imaginative literature to create a sense of inner sympathy with people of other times and places. Shakespeare and Smollett, Balzac and Tolstoy give us at least the illusion of knowing the Elizabethans and early Georgians, the 19th-century French and Russians much better than we know contemporary Arabs or Indians or Chinese or African Negroes. Certainly we feel more at home with the fictional characters because the literature which describes them is in familiar modes, is part of a unified Western cultural tradition. The characters revealed by this tradition are more "real" and interesting to us than living contemporaries of races and cultures outside Europe, even when we regard with determined good will mass movements of liberation in Asia and Africa, and know in our minds that the world future is being determined elsewhere than in Europe.

Our very limited sense of the character of inner experience in the world outside Europe and America, moreover, comes largely from European and American imaginative writers, helped out by our anthropologists. Since the illusion given in fiction of identification with our fellow humans, of understanding others' private lives, depends on specific traditional techniques developed within our own culture, we read sympathetically very little African or Asian literature except as it is directed toward us by thoroughly sophisticated and Westernized native writers. And not much of that is available. Mostly when we think of other continents and their people fictionally, we think of writers like Paul Bowles or E. M. Forster or André Malraux, or, earlier, Doughty or Kipling or Lafcadio Hearn. Various as their works are, the collective effect is to dramatize

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the difficulties really of understanding, really of entering into communion of spirit with individuals of other races and cultures in their own environment.

This is the effect also of Dan Jacobson's very attractive *A Dance in the Sun*. It is at once so immediate, so available, so humanly relevant, and yet for all its sympathy it makes seem even more distant and incalculable the Negroes of South Africa who, so vastly outnumbering their desperate white oppressors, will ultimately make that country and its future their own.

Diplomatic History

THE STRUGGLE FOR MASTERY IN EUROPE 1848-1918. By A. J. P. TAYLOR. Oxford. 638 pp. $7.00.

Reviewed by H. STUART HUGHES

EVER since an explosive book entitled *The Course of German History* appeared in 1946, Mr. A. J. P. Taylor has been regarded as the *enfant terrible* of British historical writing. "Brilliant," "contentious," "provocative"—all the customary adjectives have been applied to him—and usually with an undertone of deep annoyance. The older generation of historians has taken offense at his exaggerations and the air of sovereign contempt with which he has appeared to regard his professional colleagues. The younger generation (with its own special brand of intellectual seriousness) has found his work glib and unphilosophical and has been inclined to dismiss it as entertaining "outside reading," primarily suited for enlivening the drab existence of graduate students. As the years have passed, Mr. Taylor's anti-Germanism and Slavophilia have appeared ever quainter and—at the very least—out of tune with the temper of the times.

Against this background it comes as something of a surprise that Alan Bullock and F. W. D. Deakin—both, like Mr. Taylor himself, Oxford dons—should have chosen him to launch their new series, "The Oxford History of Modern Europe," with a full-dress diplomatic history of the period 1848 to 1918. The assignment was an implicit challenge. It offered an opportunity for the hotheaded, cantankerous scholar to win uncontested respectability. And this is the way Mr. Taylor appears to have taken it. His book is thorough, conscientious—quite evidently the product of enormous labor. It is a work of historical synthesis in the best tradition.

Yet like so many reformed characters, Mr. Taylor now displays an excessive zeal in the path of virtue. His book is not only solid and scholarly: it is frequently conventional and even boring. Surely diplomatic history must be the most arid of the several pastures in which the devotees of Clio toil. And Mr. Taylor has not escaped the vapors of scholastic abstraction that hover over it. Perhaps unintentionally, he has slipped into the well-worn formulas of the diplomatic historian's craft. The bulk of his book consists of the detailed recapitulation of endless conversations and conferences—some of them decisive, the majority simply confused and inconclusive. Even the professional reader frequently gets lost in the thicket. The layman may well give up in despair. An ambassador reports and a foreign minister answers him. But whose ambassador is it and to what country is he accredited? The identification came two pages back, but the reader in the meantime has lost it. And the confusion is compounded by the perhaps laudable cosmopolitanism of 19th-century diplomatic personnel: their names so often bear little relation to the linguistics of the nation they ostensibly represent.

Of course, a number of these difficulties arise from the character of Mr. Taylor's assignment. Basically he has been obliged to write a handbook of seventy years of diplomatic history suitable for advanced students. To digest in 550-odd pages the product of the massive scholarly labors that have gone into this subject is a task to make the most courageous quail. At the same time any historian with a mind as lively as Mr. Taylor's cannot escape writing a work of personal interpretation. But this aspect of the book tends to get crowded out. The author's judgments are tucked away in the concluding sentences of paragraphs and chapters where the inattentive reader may fail to notice them. And the human detail that might have given life and actuality to the account has similarly been sacrificed. Even the major actors receive only the briefest identification: Louis Napoleon alone stands out in his full complexity. One would give a great deal to have a few more peeps into the revealing eccentricities of statesmen—like the glimpse of the athletic Magyar, Andrássy, doing "three hand-stands on the table" in jubilation over a diplomatic triumph.

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Moreover, Mr. Taylor has not quite conquered his own literary mannerisms. Traces of his Slavophilia remain—in the innocent but disconcerting form of a penchant for the Slavic rendering of names that historians and diplomats have customarily written in German ("Olomouc" for "Olmütz," etc., etc.). A more bizarre example is the indomitably Anglo-Saxon "Sleswick" for "Schleswig." (In *The Course of German History,* Mr. Taylor tried out the Danish form "Slesvig," for which he now apologizes.) This objection may sound trivial, but the insistence on following local usage rather than accepted historical convention in regard to place names adds to the difficulty of reading a book that is already sufficiently taxing. There are also eccentricities of style: statesmen and diplomats are constantly described as "dreaming"—a threadbare metaphor at best. And in the big moments of his story Mr. Taylor cannot resist a return to his old vice of over-statement. Thus we learn that the Siege of Plevna (1877), at which the Turks held the Russians at bay for four months, "not merely gave the Ottoman empire another forty years of life. In the second half of the twentieth century the Turks still control the Straits, and Russia is still 'imprisoned' in the Black Sea; this was all the doing of Osman Pasha, defender of Plevna."

When all this has been said, one must honestly recognize that Mr. Taylor has written a very valuable book. Despite the overcrowding of detail, a careful reading reveals that it has a coherent structure and that at his best Mr. Taylor knows how to marshal his material to good effect. I have already suggested that his treatment of Napoleon III is uniformly excellent. The discussion of the Crimean War is the most informative that I have ever encountered; Mr. Taylor has at last enabled us to understand—in terms of the convergence of two radically contrasting reasons for opposing Russia on the part of Britain and of France—a struggle that has usually appeared inconclusive and purposeless. Above all, in an introductory essay entitled "The Great Powers of Europe," he has given us a tantalizing taste of the sort of book he might have written if he had not been confined within the strict framework of a historical handbook. Here we find the sub-structure, the material underpinning of conventional diplomacy—figures and rates of growth for population and industrial productivity, the meaning of army strengths, the social realities behind the concept of national power. The more's the pity that the author chose to leave this approach to a free-standing essay—a forethought or an afterthought—rather than to integrate it more fully with the main body of his book.

Mr. Taylor's old hostility to Germany—and more particularly to Bismarck—has become greatly attenuated. His book is as "objective" as any history can be that springs from a deeply held conviction of the contemporary relevance of the subject matter. It is true that he does not offer sufficient evidence for his contention that Germany after the turn of the century aimed at "predominance over the Continent." But he qualifies this by giving due weight to the familiar thesis that it was confusion rather than deliberate planning that was most characteristic of Wilhelminian diplomacy. "Who rules at Berlin?" the Austrian foreign minister queried, half in amusement and half in despair, in the tense days at the end of July 1914.

The outbreak of the First World War nat-

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urally provides the climax of Mr. Taylor's narrative. And he handles it in masterly fashion. In no more than ten pages he cuts to the center of the long and wordy controversy that has surrounded the immediate origins of the war. The bulk of the responsibility he puts back where it originally rested—on the Central Powers. And now that virtually all the relevant documents have been published (one must recall that in the 1920's the Germans had the advantage of getting theirs out first), few American historians, I think, would quarrel with him. If the Austrians and Germans, he argues, together bear the primary responsibility, it is for differing reasons. The former were afraid, the latter were confident. "The only point of agreement between them was in believing that [their] problems could be settled by war." The Germans "did not decide on war; but they did decide . . . to use their superior power either to win a war or to achieve a striking success."

"It would be wrong," Mr. Taylor further argues, "to exaggerate the rigidity of the system of alliances or to regard the European war as inevitable. . . . The existing alliances were all precarious." Nor could the British have averted the war by defining their policy more precisely. "The German general staff had long planned to invade France through Belgium and would not have been deterred by any British threat." Such statements as these represent Mr. Taylor's work at its best—direct and hard-hitting, but at the same time eminently sensible.

The final chapter—on the diplomacy of the war itself—is necessarily somewhat anticlimactic. But it has its own internal logic. It enables Mr. Taylor to bring his account to an artistic conclusion by suggesting that at the beginning of 1918—with the advent of Wilson and of Lenin—"all the old ambitions . . . became trivial and second-rate, compared to the new struggle for control of the world. . . . Henceforward what had been the centre of the world became merely 'the European question'." The verdict is not dissimilar to the one rendered by Hajo Holborn in *The Political Collapse of Europe* (Knopf, 1951). But Professor Holborn chose to make it in the form of an interpretative essay—judiciously selecting from the diplomatic record of the past century only those elements that "continue to be alive" today. Mr. Taylor made the opposite choice—to unroll the whole record as fully as space allowed. The result could not fail to be less clear and cogent than Professor Holborn's slim volume.

One may regret the choice that Mr. Taylor has felt obliged to make. But one may also gladly concede that in so doing he has written a book that promises to hold its place for many years as the standard diplomatic history of the last era in which Europe was the center of the world.

"Prophetic Religion"

JUSTICE AND JUDAISM. By ALBERT VORSPAN AND EUGENE J. LIPMAN. Union of American Hebrew Congregations. 271 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by JAKOB J. PETUCHOWSKI

ONE always suspects that behind a religious orthodoxy's zealous defense of even the minutiae of its past there lies a refusal, admitted or unconscious, to face new challenges. This would seem to have been one of the factors making for the division between Pharisees and Sadducees in ancient days. (See my article, "The Pharisaic Tradition Today," in February 1956 COMMENTARY.)

By their very fundamentalism in Scriptural interpretation the Sadducees excluded many areas of life from religious influence; the "letter of the Law," which alone they considered binding, had reference to a society long since left behind by the movement of history. The Pharisees, on the other hand, were able to take all of life for their province precisely because their doctrine of the "Oral Law" freed them from the kind of literalism that must have passed for "orthodoxy" prior to the ultimate victory of their movement. That later generations took it for granted that the Pharisees were "orthodox" and the Sadducees "schismatic" is one of those ironies of which history is made.

Modern Reform Judaism originally set itself up in conscious opposition to a way of thinking which saw Judaism as circumscribed by the "four cubits of the Halachah"—a Halachah, moreover, which had arisen in response to the needs of Jewish life in an age that ended abruptly with the Emancipation. The official teachers of Judaism were caught completely unprepared by the Emancipation, which, almost overnight, made obsolete a whole quarter of the *Shulchan Aruch*—the part dealing with civil law, business, capital-labor relations, etc.,

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etc. There was nothing the rabbinate could do but acquiesce in this loss of religious control over important areas of life, just as their predecessors some eighteen centuries before must have acquiesced in the inevitable loss (or, at any rate, suspended animation) of the whole complex of laws dealing with the Jerusalem Temple, the sacrificial system, and the administration of an independent national state.

What was left after the Emancipation was a truncated Judaism which made up for its loss of relevance in the social sphere by heightened emphasis on those aspects of ancient legislation which could still be maintained: ritual, the dietary laws, and—subject to conformity with secular state law—the rules governing marriage and divorce. Meanwhile, the legal codes of earlier rabbinic authorities—in themselves the very proof of Pharisaic liberalism vis-à-vis the "Written Law"—were made the basis of a new and passionate fundamentalism inhibiting any radical departures from tradition which the times may have demanded.

REBELLING against rabbinic legalism, and, ultimately, against the absolute authority of the Mosaic Law itself, the Reformers took their stand on the Hebrew Prophets. Reform Judaism was "Prophetic Judaism," and, as such, it was contrasted to "Priestly Religion" and the elaborate systems of Levitical purity and dietary observances. It is a moot question in Bible scholarship to this day whether the Prophets were unequivocally opposed to ritual itself, or whether they merely fought the usurpation of morality by ritual.* This much, however, is clear: from the writings of the Hebrew Prophets many verses can be culled which appear to emphasize ethics over ritual, and which formulate the basic requirements of religion in terms of "doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God."

A Judaism thus formulated and understood —however inadequate Reform's evaluation of the role of ritual in Jewish life may have been —made it possible for the Jew of the Emancipation and post-Emancipation era to widen the scope of his religion, and to find religious outlets in philanthropy rather than in the kitchen.

This approach, however, had its dangers: "Prophetic Religion," for example, might come to be completely identified with conformity to bourgeois morality, or with mere "do-goodism." Or, on the other hand, it could easily shade off into non-sectarian and non-religious "Ethical Culture."

And indeed, one might ask why a religious denomination should in the first place wish to occupy itself with activities which seem to differ little from the concerns of secular liberalism. Is it not an anachronism for religion to try to recapture the area of social justice—just as it would be for philosophy to re-establish its dominion over astronomy?

But from the point of view of Judaism, there can be no distinction between "religion" and the task of establishing "the Kingdom of God on earth." The logical outcome of a religion which renounces all concern with social relations would be the hermit, and—with the exception of certain sects at the fringe—normative Judaism has never esteemed that type.

There was also a paradox in Reform's identification with "Prophetic Religion." As writers of sociological studies of Jewish life are forever telling us, the membership of Reform congregations is—or, at any rate, was—largely drawn from the upper middle class, hardly the social group that could be expected to take the initiative in changing the status quo. Even during the days when the Social Gospel was in vogue, its Reform Jewish champions were to be found largely—though perhaps not exclusively—in the ranks of the rabbinate rather than in the pews. *Justice and Judaism* tells us about some rabbis who took their "Prophetic Religion" seriously—to the point of endangering their positions by speaking out for unpopular causes. Some of them lost their congregations; others merely lost a few wealthy members. But still others—and this is the encouraging sign—were able to carry their congregations with them.

BY NOW, the make-up of Reform congregations is rather more heterogeneous than in the past, and it would also seem that the idea of "Prophetic Religion" has begun to be conceived in more concrete terms than it once was. Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath, addressing the Forty-Third Biennial Assembly of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in 1955, was very outspoken in his appraisal of the needs of the hour: "A guide for Reform Judaism do we desire? Indeed we do. But not for ritual and rites alone—but for righteous con-

*See James Brown's "The New Old Testament" in April 1956 COMMENTARY.—ED.

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duct and decent behavior between man and man. . . ."

Justice and Judaism, in offering practical suggestions as to how the individual Reform congregation can get down to brass tacks with "Prophetic Religion," is a modest attempt to supply such a guide, and a sign of Reform's effort to undertake the reclamation of the social sphere of life by religion.

The book grows out of Reform's Joint Commission on Social Action, made up of representatives from both the rabbinic and the lay bodies. It is now urged that every Reform temple in America set up its own Social Action or Community Affairs committee. Such committees, it is hoped, will play as vital a part in congregational life as do the Building and Education committees. *Justice and Judaism* outlines the areas in which a Social Action committee can be useful: housing, education, marriage and the family, crime, punishment and juvenile delinquency, civic reform, civil rights, civil liberties, religious liberty, interreligious activities, economic affairs, immigration, and peace and international relations. After a detailed discussion of a particular problem, which often clarifies for the layman such complex issues as monopoly, natural resources, and farm policy, each chapter in this book offers concrete suggestions on "the role of the synagogue," as well as a useful bibliography. (There is a valuable appendix of relevant documents, among which are such items as the social justice platforms of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the Charter for the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism, as well as the evidence of similar endeavors on the part of Conservative Judaism.)

The aim of *Justice and Judaism* is practical: to assist the local Social Action committees in their work. Only the record of these individual committees can, in the last analysis, offer material for a proper evaluation of *Justice and Judaism.* But from the perspective of Reform Judaism's history to date, this book can already be welcomed as an earnest of Reform's sincerity about "Prophetic Religion," and as evidence of Reform's achievement in bridging the unnatural gulf between religion and life which first called it into being over a century ago.

Whether there will be anything in a religiously inspired social action movement that the corresponding secular endeavors cannot match, is a question which, again, only the

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concrete achievements of the Social Action committees can answer. Yet it may well be the case that a religious demand for social action under such respectable auspices as those of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations will assure a wider circle of champions for the movement than it could possibly have when presented in political terms pure and simple.

"Hansen's Law" in Fiction

AN END TO DYING. By SAM ASTRACHAN. Farrar, Straus & Cudahy. 246 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by SUZANNE SILBERSTEIN

IN SPITE of the warning on the jacket, *An End to Dying,* a first novel by a twenty-one-year-old recent graduate of Columbia, *is* "another autobiographical novel of groping youth." This is its failing, but also its virtue. It fails because, like most first novels, or perhaps like all novels written in America since the war, it lacks a tone of its own. Its virtue, at the same time, is that it is so typical: it clearly expresses the dilemma of young American Jews who desperately seek their identity, their "name in the street," and come to feel during the search that the streets in America have no names. Sam Star (the young hero and narrator of the book) repudiates the garbled Judaism of his rich uncles, the New York Cohens, who have migrated to America from East Europe. America, for them, he believes, has become the land of the lotus eaters, a paradise of escape whose opium is green dollar bills. As the Kagans of Czarist Russia, they lived Judaism in a purer form. And it is this purer Judaism of a latter day East Europe which Mr. Astrachan celebrates in his novel. He sees the Kagans not as a stoop-shouldered, meek, repressed community of Jews isolated against the backdrop of gigantic Russia, but as a people driven by a will to power and possessing the spiritual means to achieve it. If there is something of fantasy in Mr. Astrachan's vision of his ancestors, there is also a conviction that gives to the first half of the novel real force and brilliance. This is especially true of the portrait of Jacob Kagan, Sam Star's eldest uncle.

Jacob represents the Jewish wish for physical prowess come true, while his shrewdness recalls the stories told of the Baron Rothschild. Ultimately, his wrestling is not with the Gentile but with God, and his old age is a picture of a tragic hero who has somehow grown so powerful that he has gotten out of touch with his simple Jewish origin. When he is killed during the civil war by the aristocratic Russians who have always leaned on him with hate, we feel that something great has died out of the world. More than this, Mr. Astrachan manages to suggest that Jacob's death is a direct consequence of his wish to assimilate and say, like a character out of Dostoevsky, "Hurrah for Kagan."

MR. ASTRACHAN, however, is much less effective in handling the present than the past. The present, unfortunately, is not merely an outgrowth of the past, but its shadow, and comes off second best, like a hand-me-down dress. Sam Star, revealingly enough, feels least comfortable in the United States; he is a foreigner in the here and now. Contemporary New York and Paris are merely "escapes from the reality of heritage" and never quite come off. We only know we are in the Bronx, or in a Paris night club, because the author tells us so.

This curious unevenness in the novel, between the first half which re-lives the past, and the second, which relegates the present to the shades, is attributable, I think, mainly to Mr. Astrachan's inability to judge his own environment with the detachment that would allow him to understand it. Sam Star says that the Cohens are nothing more nor less than "the sons and daughters sucked into the watered-down version of their parents' watered-down new world existence." Every word he speaks is in this "I hate America" style, full of the rebellion of the 20's and full, too, of its clever wisecracks. Consequently, the characters of the present lack substance: Sam Star himself turns out to be the prosaic picture of a poor boy from the Bronx, recalcitrant, dissatisfied; the Cohens are burlesques of the cloak-and-suiters in a Yiddish joke.

This latter portion of the novel is important, however, if only because it provides so extreme an expression of a point of view that is current in many periodicals and Jewish novels of our time. It voices the need of the third-generation Jew in America (and perhaps the third-generation anything) to remember what their fathers try to forget (otherwise known as "Hansen's law"): the country from which they come, and their heritage. It further inti-

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mates that the image of America as the place where a wholly new life could be established is mythical: America can never smother the past, and no "New World" is new as long as there was an "Old World" before it. Those, like the Cohens, who try to forget are shapeless, ineffectual, like dangling participles.

The new artists are ineffectual, too. They are exiles in Paris, like Jess Kraut, who have forgotten that "a Jew must always work with the knowledge that he is a Jew," who spend their days and nights haunting the old hangouts of an Ernest Hemingway, and sleeping with night-club prostitutes. They have never heard of classic Yiddish literature; they have no sense of a past, but only of the moment. It is not surprising that Shymolya Bernstein, the Yiddish writer, and Jess Kraut, the modern writer, have never heard of one another.

Finally, Mr. Astrachan would seem to maintain, with Santayana, that "if you are afraid to remember your past, you have to live it over again." This is what Sam Star does as he retraces the steps of his ancestors in an effort to find his own place in the world. He writes in his diary:

"July 30, 1952. Sam Star is my name, and here and now I claim my heritage. My progenitors were the warriors and prophets of Israel, and my God is the God of Israel. When I speak or sing to God, my head is unbowed and uncovered. I look him in the eye and, with love and anger, I'll say my piece. That's the way I am."

That's the way our younger generation is too. With love and with anger they seem to be seeking a birthright which their parents have sought to conceal from them.

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

IRVING KRISTOL was formerly an editor of COMMENTARY and is now co-editor of *Encounter* in London.

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SUZANNE SILBERSTEIN here makes her first appearance in print. She is currently working for her doctorate at Columbia.

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